

THE ENGLISH BRANCH OF THE PIERSE FAMILY*

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There can be little doubt that, from the earliest times when a branch of the FitzMaurices, barons of Lixnaw, chose to distinguish themselves by the assumption of the surname Pierse (from the eponymous ancestor Piers fitz Maurice plus Elizabethan 'e'), members of the clan chose to leave their native Kerry and settle abroad. This could be from Elizabethan times (16th C) onwards and besides enlisting in foreign armies, they settled in England, on the European continent and, more recently, emigrated to America and Australia. Evidence of this is shown in the perpetuation of their distinctive form of spelling their surname and in the perpetuation of certain favourite forenames.

No doubt England and Wales were early chosen places for emigration but while in these countries the surname Pierse is by no means uncommon, variations in spelling tend to confuse separate identification and 'blurring' of family's genealogies results.

The only family derived from a North Kerry ancestor whose descendants have continuously been domiciled in England for more than seven generations (say 250 years) is the lineage of 'John Fitzmaurice Pierse of Listowel'. The reason for the quotation marks is that this is the cognomen by which he is known in the records but, in the view of the present writer, is hardly likely to have been used by the man himself.

John Fitzmaurice Pierse was evidently born in North Kerry and his distinctive name may have come about: (1) because he was thus baptismally named (unlikely), (2) because he was John the son of Maurice (possibly, but the later use of Maurice as a personal family name may have been due to other reasons - see below), (3) because he (or others) wanted - probably for snobbish reasons - to assert their relationship to the Barons of Lixnaw who, by this time, were also Earls of Kerry and Marquises of Lansdowne. Because this distinctive appellation appears throughout his records, it is used consistently throughout this article, but for the reasons given it is highly unlikely that this form will appear in contemporary records later to be discovered.

From later records, it is evident that John Fitzmaurice Pierse was born in the year 1763 and probably in the Listowel area of north Kerry. A more precise location of his birthplace is at present not possible: he was described as 'of Listowel' in 1843 and his death certificate shows that he was a saddler by trade. At this period (mid 18th C), there were ___ Catholic parishes in Co. Kerry north of

* Editor's note. This incomplete manuscript on the English Branch of the Pierse family dates from a later period than the book. From the acknowledgment to John and Peter Hill and the information included about the Australian descendants of William Fitzmaurice Pierse, it must post-date the article by J. H. Pierse published in Issue 7 of the East London Record in 1984: "Rescue of the Crown Jewels in 1841: the true facts". My father made a photocopy of this document in 1995 and a copy was later sent to Peter Hill who made some comments and corrections, in a letter of 7/9/00. I have included his comments as endnotes to the document. The manuscript contains many gaps, mainly missing dates or first names. In some cases, I have been able to fill these gaps using other sources of information. The major gap, however, on the outcome of the de Lacy court case remains.

Tralee, with ___ adjacent to the small town of Listowel located on the river Feale. Protestant families were in the leading positions and the Catholics were suppressed not to be liberated until the repeal of the Penal Laws in 1829. The Catholic parish registers for some of these parishes exist but few contain entries earlier than 1795, thus there is not much likelihood of establishing his precise date of birth and parentage. From other contemporary records, however, we can trace branches of the family settled at Doon (John Pierse, Kilderry par: will 1815), Aulane (Garret Pierse, Killahan par: will 1726), Meenogahane (Garret, Thomas, Richard and Ellen Pierse, ___ par: wills ___), Rathkerry (John Pierse, Odorney par: will ___), Parkbee (Maurice Garret Pierse, Rattoo par. will 1806), Ballynegeragh (Richard, Edmund, Jane and James Pierse, par. wills 1772), Doon (John Pierse, par: will 1815), Tralee (Richard Pierse, Tralee par: will 1789), Patrick Pierse and William Pierse (mentioned in law suit of Anderson v Crosbee 1731) and Desrico (Garret Pierse, ___ parish.)

The population of Co. Kerry at this time was about 66,557 comprising ___ Protestants and ___ Roman Catholics. The population of Listowel was about ___. Among the list of names of merchants and tradesmen in Listowel towards the end of the 18th C, we note one saddler - a Mr. Healy and three leather merchants - Edmund Calahan, Edward Hogan and Oliver Stokes.

Listowel at this time (1750-1800) was described as ‘a poor little village, there are here the ruins of a castle and a dwelling-house conjoined in one ... it is remarkably strong and in great preservation its base washed by the river Feale ... and with a very fine new bridge of eleven arches...’ (1797). In 1841, figures from the Census return show that while 75 per cent of the people in the rural part of Listowel parish lived in one-room mud cabins, the corresponding figure for the town part of the parish was only 31 per cent. The staple diet in the area was potatoes and milk.

In this environment, John Fitzmaurice Pierse grew up, probably earning his living as a saddler, but towards the end of the 18th C., he removed to Newcastle West in Co. Limerick, where he met and later married Miss Johanna O’Brien, eldest daughter of Pierce O’Brien and his wife Johanna, née de Lacy of nearby Templeglantin. He was then in his early 30s and Johanna O’Brien was probably a few years his junior.

Newcastle West at this time (1786) was described thus: ‘Newcastle was formerly a place of consequence, and there yet remains a considerable part of a noble castle and house belonging to the Knights templars. So late as 25 years ago (i.e. in 1761) it was a grand mart between Kerry and Limerick, and very many of the inhabitants were wealthy’. Here then on the 27th August 1795, John Fitzmaurice Pierse married Johanna O’Brien. Father Morgan O’Brien, described as a kinsman of the bride, performed the ceremony at Newcastle West. The bride’s father, Pierce O’Brien, is stated to be of the Dromoland, Co. Clare family, Dromoland castle being the historic seat of the senior branch of the O’Brien family - Earls of Inchiquin. The grave of Fr. Morgan O’Brien (1732-1796) can still be seen in Newcastle West graveyard. These O’Briens of West Limerick appear to have been highly respected and in press and official notices are credited with the title Esquire.

The mother of the newly wed Mrs. Pierse, also baptised Johanna, was the daughter of Patrick de Lacy (17__-18__) of Rathcahill, a townland in West Limerick a mile or so from Templeglantin, and Lady Mary, daughter of Henry Herbert of Templeglantin. Patrick and Mary de Lacy of Rathcahill had a number of children: Maurice, the eldest (1739-1820) later to become the famous General in the Russian service of Augustovik Palace near Grodno, and Henry (17__-18__) - who 'conformed' (to the Protestant religion in ____) and who lived in Dublin, Johanna (1750-1795) who married Pierce O'Brien (above), Mary (1752-1795) who eloped with a certain William Terence (later 'Patrick') O'Brien of Tullig and Drumtrasna, Frances (17__-) who married a certain Mr. Joyce but had no family, and Benedicta (17__-____).

Looking back now, it is difficult to imagine that the newlywed John and Johanna Pierse could have foreseen events resulting from their marriage alliance which, to this day, have still not satisfactorily been resolved. The date of their marriage is known for a certainty because it became an important factor during a Chancery Court action opened nearly a half-century later but at that time, 1841, well within living memory. Today, no entry in the local parish registers (at least those which have survived, Newcastle-West and Moregay) for the wedding can be found, although doubtless, in those times of the Penal Laws, many weddings must have been celebrated privately by the parish priest. Fr. Morgan O'Brien, parish priest of St. ____'s Newcastle West, was a popular figure and is well documented.

At the time of the wedding in 1795, John Fitzmaurice Pierse was 32 years of age and his bride, Johanna was 25 years old. As already stated, details of the bridegroom's family are not known, but both of the parents of Johanna were then deceased, her mother having died the same year and her father some time before 1794. Her uncle, General Maurice de Lacy of the Russian service, was in Ireland in 1792 to visit his ageing mother living in a state of poverty at Rathcahill, but returned the next year. Her aunt Benedicta, who had married James Murphy Esq. of Newcastle West and Killarney, and had two daughters Mary and Lucy, had died before 1792. Her uncle, Henry de Lacy, as already stated, had (as a new Protestant convert) taken an eviction order out in 1770 against his relative Mrs. Evans, and himself was deceased before 1791. Her aunt Fanny (Frances) had married a Mr. Joy but had no children and died before 1792. Her youngest aunt Mary who had eloped with a Terence or Dennis O'Brien of Tallig and Drumtrasna and had had at least five children (all allegedly illegitimate) the youngest of whom was named Patrick, who was born in 1790, married a Miss Egan at Bath, England and was later divorced; he later became known as Patrick O'Brien de Lacy of Grodno. At the time of John and Johanna Pierse's wedding Mary de Lacy (or Mrs. Mary O'Brien) was dead and her youngest child Patrick O'Brien was 5 years old.

The first recorded birth of a child to John and Johanna Pierse was Maurice in 1804 and who was known as Maurice de Lacy Pierse. The couple had been married for nine years and we cannot tell if there had been previously other children who might not have lived very long. It is possible that

Maurice was one of a twin as another son, William Fitzmaurice Pierse appears to have been born the same year. So far no parish record of any of the children born to John and Johanna Pierse has so far come to light and, in the light of non-survival or destruction of so many parish registers in Ireland, this is perhaps not surprising. In fact it is by no means certain that they were all born in Newcastle West, Templeglantin or Rathcahill. For at least two, subsequent records state Co. Kerry as their place of birth. The next children born were Mary (de Lacy) Pierse born in 1807, in Co. Kerry, according to her son's birth certificate, John (Patrick) Pierse, born in 1811, in Co. Kerry, according to the Census Returns of 18__, and George, born in 1816. It is probable that other children were born to John and Johanna, including Patrick John Pierse, born around 18__, and also possibly a number of daughters as well.

In 1819, the eldest son Maurice, at the tender age of 15, left Ireland to visit his grand-uncle General Maurice de Lacy, then aged 79, at his palace home at Augustovik near Grodno in Russian Lithuania. He was apparently well received there and stayed on together with his friend Dr. Condon during the time of the General's final illness and death in January 1820. His aunt's son, Patrick O'Brien, whose legitimacy was a matter of dispute among the de Lacy family, had also left Ireland first in 1811, at the age of __ where he married Miss ___ Egan at Bath, and later travelled to Russia to introduce himself to the general, and who also remarked that he had been well-received at Grodno. Immediately prior to 1815, Patrick O'Brien, then aged 24 or 25, had become a Lieutenant of Militia in the Russian service. Between 1815 and 1819, Patrick O'Brien spent half a year in Russia and half in England because of his poor health. In 1819, at the request of General Maurice de Lacy, he took up permanent residence in Russia and, upon the General's recommendation, applied for and obtained a commission in the Guards of the Russian Emperor. Thus, when General Maurice died at Grodno in December 1819, these three, Dr. Condon, Lieutenant Patrick O'Brien (de Lacy) and Maurice de Lacy Pierse, were in attendance at the funeral. Immediately after the funeral, Maurice de Lacy Pierse was persuaded by Patrick O'Brien (de Lacy) to go to London from Poland, where he arranged to meet him regarding the contents of the General's will which, O'Brien declared, would not be made available until twelve months time.

About this time, 1820-1, Johanna Pierse died (it is not certain whether in Ireland or in England) at the age of about 50 years, and shortly afterwards the Pierse family emigrated to England. The family would have been: John Fitzmaurice Pierse, widower, aged 59, William Fitzmaurice, aged 18, Mary de Lacy, aged 15, John Patrick, aged 11, Patrick John, aged about 9, George, aged 6, and any other children not yet traced. Their mode and line of travel is also not yet known, but they most likely sailed from Limerick or Cork to London, where Maurice, aged 18, was already in residence.

The fortunes of the motherless Pierse family as just described from the time of their departure from Ireland to their emergence from obscurity around the year 1824 are as yet not known. Emigration from Ireland was common at this time and colonies of Irish men and women were to be found in clusters around the main line London railway stations at King's Cross and St. Pancras,

Islington and the Gray's Inn Road area - besides groups in the East End of London and elsewhere. In the Gray's Inn Road area of Holborn in particular, all accommodation in whole streets was occupied by Irish people. In one street, Wilson Place, entire houses were occupied all by Co. Kerry emigrants and names like 'Patrick FitzGerald, born Co. Kerry', 'Bridget Hogan from Co. Kerry', 'John Carnoy of Dingle, Co. Kerry', etc. abound. It is probably in one of these areas that the depleted Pierse family existed. When in London, son Maurice seems to have been located in the Islington St. John Street Road area.

From later records made available by the law suit of Reed v. O'Brien (1841-46), it is evident that Maurice de Lacy Pierse returned to Russia and there joined the Russian Service. Letters sent by him, dated November 1823 (when he was 19) from Petrosky in Russia to his sister Mary (aged 16) in London, written up to Autumn 1829 addressed from Chumetry just before he died in the siege of Adrianople in September, 1829 outline his career and give some indication of the simple-hearted, good humoured personality that he had. The earliest London address employed by the family at this time appears to be an accommodation address: 'De Lacy Pierse Esq., 138 St. John Street Road, Islington': this address seems to have been shared with William and Henry Hind, printers.

About this time, the first notices appear in the Court and Commercial London Directories in respect of Charles Nash, who later married Maurice's sister Mary Pierse. Not much so far has come to light regarding this shadowy figure: in some directories he is listed as a solicitor with addresses in Cheapside and St. John Street. Nash is a fairly common Limerick name and so he might well have been an Irishman - even a Limerick or a Kerryman. He was certainly in the legal / parliamentary / literary field, as his productions and business references make clear. His age is so far not known but when they married in 1836, Mary was 29 and it is presumed that he would have been about 32. From 1829 onwards, literary productions on all sorts of topics ranging from 'The Russian War in Turkey', to 'History of the War in Afghanistan', 'Railway and Land Taxations', 'Railway Robberies' etc. were published.

Taking a cynical view, it would appear to the present writer that, given they had much in common intellectually (and possibly socially), Mary used her family relationship with the sparkling de Lacy family (as well as her own family connections) and with the promise of a fortune to come by way of her marriage settlement to attract and secure in matrimony the besotted Charles Nash. They were married on the 5th April, 1836 at the (C. of E.) parish church of St. Pancras, then newly built. Their addresses at the time of marriage were stated to be 7 Brunswick Terrace, Islington West, a fashionable address in a community of literary and artistic intellectuals. Not surprisingly, Mary's father John Fitzmaurice Pierse, of course a Roman Catholic, is not mentioned in the marriage records. Three years after the marriage, on the 1st January 1839, a son, later to be christened Maurice FitzGerald de Lacy Nash, was born to them: there is no doubt that Mary was well versed in her family genealogy. From this time onwards, all members of the family used the surname form 'de Lacy Nash'.

The anticipated fortune referred to above, which Mary Pierse intended to be her marriage settlement, came about, briefly, as follows. When in 1792 General Maurice de Lacy of Grodno (then aged 52) together with his kinsman General Count George de Lacy Browne, Governor of Riga, made a visit to Ireland to see their relatives, they were appalled to see the state of poverty into which the family had fallen. They stayed with Maurice's mother (then quite elderly) at Rothcahill (where the pathetic ruins of the family cabin still stand) and returned to Russia the following year. Upon their return, Maurice made arrangements for sums of money (in silver roubles) to be paid through agencies to his mother for as long as she should live and thenceafter to his sisters or their descendants. The total sum of money, paid over a number of years, amounted to £__. His mother did not live long to enjoy her fortune and died in 1795 (the year in which John Fitzmaurice Pierse and Johanna O'Brien were married) leaving future gifts to pass to her daughters and their descendants: these were John Fitzmaurice and Johanna Pierse (daughter of Johanna O'Brien, née de Lacy who also died in 1795), Mary Condon, née O'Brien, whose husband Richard Condon had died before 1792 and whose eldest son Dr. Maurice John Condon joined General Maurice in the Russian service, Kathleen or Kitty O'Brien (otherwise Mrs. Fitton or Mrs. McGrath of Cork) - later all daughters of Johanna O'Brien née de Lacy. Other equal beneficiaries were: James Morphy of Newcastle West and Killarney (widower of Benedicta née de Lacy, who died before 1792) and their children Miss Mary Morphy who died in March, 1819 and her sister Lucy Morphy (otherwise Berry) who had married another James Morphy and who was still living in 1830. Other possible beneficiaries were the daughters of Mary de Lacy (otherwise O'Brien) who was the youngest of General Maurice de Lacy's sisters, who was alleged to have eloped with a certain Terence or Dennis O'Brien of Tullig and Drumtrasna, and who had an illegitimate son, Patrick. Another sister, Frances (or Fanny) had married a certain Mr. Joy but died before 1792 without issue.

All evidence suggests that Mary Pierse (now Mrs. Charles de Lacy Nash) schemed that by claiming the entire share of the fortune due to her mother and father, she could offer a substantial dowry to her intended husband, Charles Nash. The fact that he was a lawyer would assist in contriving the necessary procedures and steps to be taken. There had been some hold-up in making the necessary payments to the beneficiaries occasioned by conniving by Patrick O'Brien de Lacy who it will be recalled wormed his way into General Maurice de Lacy's affection and trust. It was he who was entrusted by his 'uncle' to transmit the sums of money to England and Ireland, but who dismally failed. He accepted the moneys on trust but withheld payment in the UK and arranged for his own personal banking account to be credited with the monies while assuring the General at the same time that his duties had been correctly and fully discharged. With no money arriving, Mary de Lacy took matters into her own hands.

She wrote repeatedly to Patrick O'Brien who, upon the death of General Maurice in 1819/20 had taken up residence and possession of the estate at Augustovik Palace, near Grodno. Her husband Charles Nash had an interview in September 1836 with Sir Matthew John Tierney who was Patrick

O'Brien's agent in London and a Trustee of the beneficiaries money, apparently with no positive results. On the 5th April, 1837, the marriage settlement between Mary de Lacy (née Pierse) and Charles Nash was drawn up and signed by John Fitzmaurice Pierse (her father), Mary de Lacy Nash, Charles Nash, George Pierse (her youngest brother) and a certain Thomas O'Conner. In 1839, she obtained government interference to procure copies of General Maurice de Lacy's will and the circumstances of Patrick O'Brien's inheritance were laid before the British Government who obtained aid of the Russian Government in calling for an explanation of General de Lacy's documents and Maurice de Lacy Pierse's effects who had died in 1829 and Patrick O'Brien had failed to get them dispatched to his family in London.

During 1841, several advertisements were inserted in the Limerick Chronicle inviting applications from claimants to the 'de Lacy fortune' to be sent to solicitors acting for beneficiaries. Further letters were exchanged between Mary de Lacy Nash, her husband, and Patrick O'Brien and Sir Matthew John Tierney. In April 1842, a deed was drawn up and signed by George Pierse, John Fitzmaurice Pierse, Charles Nash and Mary de Lacy Nash and Thomas O'Conner, relieving George Pierse of the obligations as 'he was about to leave London'. His interest was transferred to Thomas O'Connor. On the 6th April, 1842, Letters of Administration of his late wife's estate (including her interest in the trust monies) were granted to John Fitzmaurice Pierse in London. In November, 1842, a letter appeared in The Times presenting John Fitzmaurice Pierse as the representative of the de Lacy and Browne families and their interests. On the 19th June 1843, another deed was drawn up and signed by Charles Nash, Mary de Lacy Nash, and Thomas O'Connor appointing John Reed as trustee. Doubtless, all this was orchestrated by Mary de Lacy Nash in her determined resolve to claim the families' dues.

The stage was now set and on the 25th July, 1843 a Bill of Complaint was filed by which Patrick O'Brien and other defendants were required to answer charges of misadministration of Trust monies due to the prosecutors. As might be expected, charges and allegations were made and denied, letters were produced and quoted, and acrimony flowed free. The original Bill was amended and represented four times between the 20th July, 1843 and the 7th April, 1845. Each time, answers were required to be given delays and evasion inevitably followed. A general impression gained is of truth and a sense of being deceived on the part of the prosecution and outright lying, deception and foot-dragging evasion in the form of denial of all charges on the part of the defence. Clearly, Patrick O'Brien was in a very strong position and, now a Russian subject, refused to give satisfactory explanations.

The case dragged on until July, 1847 when it came to an abrupt end. The final judgement by Lord Langdale was [...]*

* Editor's note. There is a gap in the manuscript at this point.

The cost of the suit must have been enormous and undoubtedly affected the relationship between members of the family. Having read all through the court documents and proceedings, it is incredible to the present writer that the final judgement went the way it did. In the first place it is not likely that Mary de Lacy Nash would have pursued the prosecution's case as vigorously as she did if she was not sure of her ground. None of her accusations as far as failure to correctly administer the trust was refuted by Patrick O'Brien. It is highly unlikely that she would have evoked Government interference unless she was sure of her ground. Most of the evidence she presented could have been checked at the time. If Patrick O'Brien really did feel that he was wronged, why did he delay so much in answering the charges. Why did he not refute legally the charges made against him regarding the alleged illegitimacy of his own birth. Why did he not produce written evidence to substantiate his statements. No. He was sitting pretty and he knew it. He had managed to dupe his aged and feeble-minded great-uncle, he had succeeded in getting recognition by the Russian authorities, and he had possession of the late General's palace, estate and effects. Possession is nine-tenths of the law.

What the present writer finds particularly galling is that 'de Lacy-Bellingare' (pseudonym of the Rev. Edy Harnett) informs us in *The Roll of the House of Lacy*, that 'the case was revived in some manner less formal some twenty years later (i.e. around 1868): at all events the Fitzgeralds of Limerick City, de Lacy-Brownes, and others were concerned with it at that time'. Elsewhere in the same publication we read that a certain 'Mrs. de Lacy-Browne was claimant to the disputed bequests of Count Maurice de Lacy of Augustovik, Grodno ... on this occasion (she) was generally reported, on good grounds, to be on the eve of benefiting to the extent of some \$5,000,000 from the various funds of her kinsman. These monies had been tied up under the jurisdiction of the English Courts of Chancery'.

Now Jeannie ('de Lacy') Norton was born at La Ganthe, Co. Limerick in 1816 and by 1826 both of her parents were deceased. She married in 1833 Thomas Browne of Drome and had a number of children including a daughter, also named Jennie who married a certain Edward Harnett of Knockfierna and Effen, Co. Limerick. They had, among other children, a son named Edy, who turns out to be the author of *The Roll of the House of Lacy*. So Jeannie 'de Lacy' Browne, who died later than 1868 and became the beneficiary of the disputed trust monies was 'de Lacy Bellingare's grandmother. We are told elsewhere that 'most of that family sought later the more congenial shores of America, where, especially in the neighbourhood of Boston, their descendants should still be found'.

But to return to our account of the Pierse family, there can be no doubt that the failure of the case must have been devastating. Instead of enjoying a substantial marriage settlement, Charles Nash must have found himself impoverished by the substantial costs of the prolonged Chancery Court action. Although keeping in touch with his wife's relatives, there seems to have developed a rift between husband and wife. He himself seems to have dropped the use of 'de Lacy' coupled with his surname - although his wife still maintained the usage. He still kept on writing and publishing and the

name of the printers 'George Peirce, 310 Strand', 'Pearce and Nephews', 'Pierse and Nash, Publishers', appear on printed publications and in Court and Trade directories up until 1875/6 when they cease. They corresponded with Maurice Lenihan when he was compiling his History of Limerick in 1866 and a large advertisement for Pierse and Nash's compilations appears at the end of this work.

The couple always lived at fashionable addresses and they were to be found at 7 Brunswick Terrace, Islington West (1836-1839), 61 Cheapside (1839), 66 Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square, St. Marylebone (1842-46), 74 Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square (1846-1847), 20 Montague Street, Portman Square (1847-1851), 18 Bridge Street, Westminster (1851-?) and finally at 7 St. Adelphi Chambers, John Street, W.C. This latter address seems to have been the haunt of artistic and professional people as well as intellectuals and service men. It is here that the trail ends. What is curious, however, is that while their addresses can be followed in the London Directories, official records, etc., in no single instance can they be located on the night of the National Censuses taken in 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, or 1881. when they would have been elderly and in their seventies. On these dates no reference to a Mary de Lacy Nash or Charles (de Lacy) Nash appears. This is a pity because the later returns would have revealed more detail regarding the age, place of birth, relationships, etc.

Also, incredibly for a lawyer and genealogist, neither appears to have left a will, and so far all attempts to trace the death certificates of Charles Nash, Mary de Lacy Nash and their son Maurice FitzGerald de Lacy Nash have been fruitless. They appear to have just disappeared. Possibly they emigrated.

Now Mary's brother William Fitzmaurice Pierse, born also in 1807 and therefore possibly a twin (although this has never been remarked upon) was also unlikely to have been christened 'Fitzmaurice' but the appellation remained with him all his life. He, too, may have been born in either Limerick or Kerry, although according to one authority he was a native of Newcastle West. He was about 18 years of age when he arrived in England with his father and his brothers and sisters. Nothing is known of his early life except that the Duke of Wellingtonⁱ was his patron and he entered Sir Robert Peel's newly formed Metropolitan Police Force in 1829. He was dismissed from the Police Force on the 22nd September, 1829 (apparently the normal procedure immediately prior to promotion), and later promoted to Inspector (as from the 28th April, 1830).

On the 6th September 1831, he married Elizabeth, the daughter of James Dede, head of a well known Huguenot family of silk manufacturersⁱⁱ of 17 Spital Square, Spitalfields, London. William was then 27 years of age and Elizabeth was just 16.ⁱⁱⁱ they were married at St. Botolph's Without (C. of E.), Bishopsgate Street Without, London. The Dedes were a long established firm in the area and the London Court and Commercial directories give notices back to at least 1822. The couple set up home at first No. 1 and later No. 17 Princess (now Princelet) Street, then a tiny little road of Georgian houses leading to^{iv} the parish church of Christchurch, an elegant structure designed and built by Hawksmoor. Their neighbours were solicitors, and similar professional residents, most of whom, including the Pierses, employed live-in domestic staff. During their time there the couple had the

following children, all of whom were baptised in Christchurch: Maurice de Lacy (b. 3 October, 1832), Elizabeth (b. 25 December 1833), Amelia (b. 16 September, 1836), Florence Johanna (b. 14 March, 1838), Marion O'Brien (b. 22 November, 1839), Kathleen (b. ____, 1841), William Fitzmaurice (b. September 1843), and Alice Emma (b. 22 February, 1845).

William Fitzmaurice Pierse was promoted to Superintendent of H Division of the Metropolitan Police about 1840 and on the 30 October, 1841 risked his life in his successful rescue of the Crown Jewels from the burning Tower of London. The anxiety associated with his very responsible position in an area noted for its social problems at that time ^v probably contributed to his early death on the 1st February, 1846, from inflammation of the brain and peritonitis.^{vi} His brother-in-law Charles Nash was with him when he died: his body was interred in Christchurch graveyard.^{vii}

After the death, Charles Nash did a 'lot in writing' to Sir Robert Peel with a view to obtaining a pension for the young widow (then only 31 years of age)^{viii} with seven or eight children, all under the age of 15 years. This was eventually secured ^{ix} and this, together with a relief appeal collection raised by the Rector of Christchurch and local business people, enabled Elizabeth and the children to carry on living in the area.

In 1847, the family removed round the corner to No. 100 Bishopsgate Street Without, and here in May 1847, their second eldest son William Fitzmaurice Pierse died at the age of 3¾ years.^x It is noticed from the Court and Commercial directories of London that Elizabeth's father, James Dede, is listed as a stationer from about 1836 onwards and was then living at 58 Bishopsgate Street Without.^{xi}

Until recently, nothing further was known about the family - they completely disappeared from the scene. The only clue to their survival is that, about the year 1870 when she was a young girl, the great aunt of the present writer Clara Kennett, née Pierse and grandniece to Spt. William Fitzmaurice Pierse, related that her family was visited by an elderly lady (evidently a lace worker) accompanied by her son and daughter who had 'come over from the Continent on a visit'. The mother would have been aged about 55 and the son and daughter about __ and __ respectively. Nothing further was known.^{xii}

Within the last year or so, it has now come to light through the good offices of descendants living in Australia, John and Peter Hill, that in 1853, the survivors of William Fitzmaurice Pierse's family emigrated to Australia. The party consisted of widow Elizabeth (then aged 43)^{xiii} and surviving children Maurice, aged 21, Elizabeth, 20, Amelia, aged 17, Florence Johanna, 15, Marion O'Brien, 14, Kathleen, 12, and a certain 'Diana' ^{xiv} - the latter not registered as a daughter of William Fitzmaurice Pierse in the R. G. registers. They sailed on the 18th October, 1853 from London on the barque 'Quito', apparently travelling steerage as no cabin passengers of the name Pierse are recorded,^{xv} and they disembarked at Hobart on the 25th February 1853/4 (O.S. calendar). They stayed in Tasmania for a few years and then settled in mainland Melbourne, Australia in 1866.^{xvi}

Maurice evidently was a rover and is believed to have died - appropriately enough - in Mauritius.^{xvii} Amelia^{xviii} married John George Masters originally of Stratford le Bow, who was born about 1839 and who died on the 23 September 1907, and had descendants still living in Australia. Amelia died there in 1911. The fates of Florence Johanna, Kathleen and Diana are not known, but Marion O'Brien married Walter Duxby and also had descendants still living in Australia.^{xix}

Elizabeth Pierse took out with her painted portraits of her husband and herself, which are still to be seen in Australia.^{xx} She died on the 13th May, 1893 at Aberdeen Road, Prahran, Melbourne in her 81st year.

George Pierse (b. 1816), a younger brother to Supt. William Fitzmaurice Pierse, emerges as a shadowy figure in this history of the family. As already mentioned, George was about six years old when the family arrived in England and would have been one of the last to remain with his father. Unfortunately, the whereabouts of the early settlement of the Pierses in London is as yet not known so for the present this must remain a mystery. Unlike other members of his family, George was mentioned in the Reed v. O'Brien case of 1843-6. His name appears as a signatory to the marriage settlement deed of his sister dated 5th April, 1837 when he was about 20 years of age. He signed a further deed on the same account on the 16th April, 1842 when it was stated that 'he was about to leave London' and he renounced his claim of assignment and John Reed was nominated in his place.

Apparently George worked as a watchman in the London Docks, probably the Old and New Docks near the Ratcliffe Highway, Whitechapel in London's East End, where he lived. The census return of 1841 for the area gives no mention of him but that for 1851 shows that he was living at 5 Clark Street, Stepney Old Town, St. Thomas's, as a lodger. He died the same year on the 24th November, 1851 of pulmonary consumption, a bachelor aged 35, with his sister Mary de Lacy Nash present at the death.

Another shadowy member of the family was Patrick John Pierse (probably b. 1830) about whom also little is known. His name first appears on the birth certificate of his son James Lacy Pierse by his wife Charlotte née Newman, on the 26th March, 1860. Patrick's trade or profession was recorded as a Civil Engineer and his address at the time as 2 Tavistock Row, Covent Garden, St. Mary le Strand. A later child, another son, named Charles Lacy Pierse was born to the couple on 21st November 1861, this time the address given was 7 John Street, Charing Cross.

This family is difficult to fit in as so little information is known. Were it not for the references to 'Lacy', 'Charles' (not a Pierse family name) and the address at 7 John Street, it might have been thought that these were members of another branch of the Pierse family. But the John Street address is conclusive. The area between the Hungerford Bridge end of the Strand between the Strand itself and the River Thames at this time was the site of a building enterprise known as The Adelphi. Intended by the developers to be a socialite desirable block of apartment residences, it was a dismal failure and finished up as post restantes for middle class professionals. Mary and Charles de Lacy Nash had an

address here for a number of years dating from 1865-1871 as Pierse and Nash, Publishers, 7 John Street, Adelphi, W.C. After 1871, there is no further reference to Pierses or Nashes at the Adelphi.

The last known child of John Fitzmaurice and Johanna Pierse was John Patrick Pierse (b. 1811) who was not the youngest of the family, but was the only one whose descendants still live on in London. John Patrick appears to be the son whom the rest of the family ignored or ostracised. He would have been aged about 9 or 10 when his mother died and about 12 when his father emigrated to England. He was about 32 years old when the Reed v. O'Brien case was on and his name is consistently missing in all family genealogical charts, articles, papers etc. He was aged about 30 when the Tower of London was on fire and about 42 when his sister-in-law Elizabeth, widow of the superintendent of police sailed for Australia.

John Patrick appears to have spent his childhood and early life in the Clerkenwell, Finsbury area of North London, and it is likely that he undertook an apprenticeship in watchmaking or engineering in this industrial area. We first hear of him on the 16th September, 1833 when, aged 22, he married Charlotte Fry, then aged about 19, at St. James's (C. of E.) parish church, at Clerkenwell, Finsbury. Not much is known about Charlotte. She was literate but from subsequent birth certificates seems to have been fond of using various Christian names. On one occasion she gave her name as 'Charlotte Rebecca Horton Pierse formerly Fry' - 'x the mark of'. Perhaps Horton was her mother's maiden name and Charlotte used this in emulation of her 'posh' in-laws. It is not certain if she was literate: in the banns papers produced before the wedding, her fiancé's name appears as 'John Pearse' - and this could be a spelling error on the part of either the bride-to-be or the vicar. On the marriage certificate itself the groom's name is shown as 'John Pearse' but the actual signature of the bridegroom is clearly written as 'John Pierse'.

The couple had a number of children, the eldest, George, baptised on the 15th March 1835 at St. Leonard's (C. of E.) parish church, Shoreditch: the father's name is entered as 'John Pearse' and the mother as 'Charlotte'. evidently their first home must have been in the Bromley by Bow area of the East End of London adjacent to his brother William. They had 12 children in all, in birth order George (b. 1835), above, John (b. 1836) who was born in the same area but died young, Maurice (b. 1838), a female (b. 1840) who also died young, William (b. 1842), but who also died young, Charlotte (b. 1844), who also died young, William Fitzmaurice (b. 1846), Elizabeth (b. 1848), Thomas (b. 1849), Henry (b. 1851), Amelia (b. 1853) and Henry de Lacy (b. 1856) - the last.

The family consisting of John, his wife Charlotte and children George (aged 2) and John (aged 1) removed about the year 1837 across the river to Greenwich, Kent. Their first home there was a cottage in Ship and Billett Row, a row of about ten cottages on Marsh lane, adjacent to the public house of the same name. At this period, this area consisting of a northerly projecting loop in the Thames close to the royal palace of Greenwich and its park was market gardening territory and the area of settlement of a number of Irish families. Here Maurice was born on the 11th August 1838 and a daughter, unnamed born and died the same year 1840. By the time of the 1841 (8 June) Census, the

family had removed across the road to Woolwich Road: John's trade or profession was recorded as 'Engineer' and his place of birth not in the same county (i.e. Kent). At this time the family were living on their own but before the time of the next census, ten years hence, John's father John Fitzmaurice Pierse came to live with them and here he died 'of old age', formerly a saddler, on the 4th September, 1843, his address being given as Marsh Lane, Greenwich, and with his son John in attendance at the death.

Here in March, 1842 son William was born (probably named after his famous uncle) but who died the following September 1843. From then on, the birth of children to John and Charlotte Pierse is somewhat erratic - possibly an effect of the numerous deaths in the family around this time. Daughter Charlotte, doubtless named after her mother, was born on the 30th September 1844 but at 19 Michton Street, St. Giles Cripplegate, which could have been a relative's address. This was when she first used the form 'Horton Pierse' and she signed the register with a 'x' the mark of. The little girl died the following June, 1845. On the 10th February, 1846, a son William Fitzmaurice was born, this time at 39 Baldwin Street, St. Lukes, in roughly the same area. On the 3rd December, 1848, another daughter was born, named Elizabeth, and she was born at 65 Brunswick Street, Christchurch, St. Saviour, which was a poor district in the South of London. The following year Charlotte seems to have had her children at home for on the __th June, 1849, a son Thomas was born at Greenwich.

In the Census return of 1851 (7th April), the family consisted of John Pierse, described as an Engineer Turner, b. Ireland, 39 years of age, wife Charlotte, aged 35, son George, aged 16, an Engineer's Apprentice, William, 5, a scholar, Thomas, 1, also a scholar, Elizabeth, aged 3, and Elizabeth Lyons, who was aged 79 and born in Ireland. Lyons is a Kerry name and she could have been a compatriot. Two years after the Census, Amelia Pierse was born on the __ 1853 at __ and on the 29th January, 1856 was born Henry de Lacy Pierse at 4 George Street North, Greenwich, Kent, the family having removed from 3 Chester Street a few streets away between 1851 and 1856.

At the time of the Census Return in 1861, the Pierse family at Greenwich consisted of John Pierse, Engineer, aged 50, born in Co. Kerry, Ireland,, Charlotte, aged 45, and children William, aged 15, unmarried, moulder, Elizabeth, aged 13, unmarried, 'servant at a place', Thomas, aged 11, Emily, aged 7, and Henry, aged 5, all scholars. They were then living at 24 Talbot Buildings, Woolwich Road, East Greenwich. Later the family removed to No. 1 Whitworth Street, Greenwich, where on the 2nd November 1869, John Pierse died, aged 58. Here widow Charlotte lived on together with her remaining son living at home, Thomas, aged 21 at the time of the 1871 Census, by trade a painter, also Emma, granddaughter (dau. of __) aged 9 months. Charlotte herself died at the same address on the 16th March 1878, aged 64.

With the death of Charlotte Pierse in 1878, we come to the end of the lives of the immediate descendants or their spouses of John Fitzmaurice and Johanna Pierse of Newcastle West. For some of the descendants from these members of the English branch of the Pierse family, no further information has come to light, e.g. Patrick John Pierse and his wife Charlotte Newman and their two

children James Lacy and Charles Lacy, who disappeared from the records after 1861, and perhaps emigrated abroad. For others, e.g. William Fitzmaurice Pierse, Superintendent of H Division of the Metropolitan Police, the history of his widow Elizabeth and their surviving children has only recently come to light: through the good offices of John W. Hill and his cousin Peter Hill of Australia, we can now reveal their fortune and descent as members of the Hill family.

The only known male descent now traceable is that of the children of John Patrick and

ⁱ The Australian "de Lacy Pierses" had two rival silver snuffboxes, each claiming to have been presented to William Fitzmaurice Pierse by the Duke of Wellington; but I have yet to see documentary demonstration of the nature of the relationship between the two men. The Wellington archives (and specifically the Duke's "patronage file") appear to contain no reference to WFP.

ⁱⁱ Was James Dede the head of the whole Dede family? Professionally, was he a silk manufacturer or a bookseller/stationer or a scientific writer?

ⁱⁱⁱ Elizabeth was aged 18 at the time of her marriage.

^{iv} Princess Street is near, not "leading to", Christ Church.

^v Stress occasioned by the long-running, unproductive and expensive Reed vs. O'Brien lawsuit could have been another factor.

^{vi} Was there peritonitis? The death certificate does not mention it.

^{vii} Presumably WFP was buried in the graveyard rather than the crypt; but I have seen no proof.

^{viii} Elizabeth was then aged 34.

^{ix} All the evidence I have seen points firmly towards Elizabeth *not* having been awarded a pension.

^x Might it not be prudent to say only that when the little boy died, they were living at 105 (not 100) Bishopsgate Street Without?

^{xi} The Dede family, evidently excluding the son James, emigrated to New South Wales in 1838-9, and settled at Parramatta, inland from Sydney. Papa James Dede died there just two months after landing in the colony. (His widow survived until 1862.) Their children produced numerous descendants.

^{xii} It is conceivable that Elizabeth, with her son Maurice and his wife Alicia, could have revisited England, but there is no evidence at this point; nor can a likely date be surmised.

^{xiii} All that can be said with certainty is that Elizabeth (aged 41) emigrated to Van Dieman's Land in 1853-54 accompanied by *Amelia* and two children whose names are not recorded. All of the Pierse daughters surfaced in Australia eventually, but at this point there is no evidence of when and whither and in what groupings they travelled.

^{xiv} Diana was the pet name of Alice Emma.

^{xv} Elizabeth and Amelia and the two un-named children travelled in intermediate class.

^{xvi} There is no evidence of what Elizabeth did in the early years after arriving in Hobart Town, or of where she did it. She comes to the surface in 1859, running a small school for girls. In 1867 she opens a "fancy goods" store, which runs until 1876 when she sells out (helped by Alice Emma) and moves to Melbourne, where again she drops out of sight. In 1881 she is recorded as living in a modest cottage in an upper working class suburb, where she dies of old age in 1893, aged 80½.

^{xvii} After a false start in 1846, Maurice de Lacy Pierse went to sea as an apprentice in 1847, aboard a 180 ton schooner which was based in Mauritius and which traded between there and Cape Town and Tasmanian ports. The apprenticeship's expiry roughly coincided with the Victorian gold rushes and a lengthy stay in the port of Melbourne. Maurice comes back into view in 1856, as a storekeeper in Melbourne, marrying an illiterate Irish Catholic servant girl. He becomes a public Servant in the Victorian Department of Mines in 1871, and rises to the rank of "number two" in the Department. He retires in 1893 and dies in Melbourne in 1903. The marriage emphatically had "no issue", but there were two sons, perhaps fostered. One died early, and the other lived in Sydney until the 1940's, without marrying.

^{xviii} The eldest daughter, *Elizabeth junior* ("Bess") was a rural governess in Victoria and in 1854 made the best marriage of the sisters: to a son of the legendary "village smith" - theatrically inclined, a vet., a poet, a suburban mayor and a member of parliament. Her health was poor, and she died in 1874 leaving no surviving children. *Amelia* (who preferred to be known as "Minnie") is the only daughter who we *know* accompanied her mother aboard "Quito" in 1853-4. At some point she moved to Melbourne and lived with "Bess" and her husband. In 1866 she married a hairdresser-chiroprapist and lived in genteel suburban comfort. She had two daughters, from the elder of whom the Australian "de Lacy Pierses" are descended.

^{xix} *Florence Joanna* married a draper at an outpost of the terrible convict settlement at Port Arthur in 1856. They moved to New Zealand and thence to Victoria. Their elder daughter died on her 11th birthday at Maurice de

Lacy Pierse's house. Her younger sister survived and married a carpenter; they had numerous descendants. Florence Joanna herself died in Melbourne in 1911; she was then possibly living with her sister Kathleen. *Marion O'Brien* first comes to sight in Melbourne in 1867, when she marries Walter Dudley, a prosperous wholesale butcher who, however, dies young, leaving her with three children. The family appears to have migrated back to London. The son returned to Melbourne, where he married his cousin, Amelia's younger daughter, without issue. His two sisters married in England, with issue.

Kathleen ("Kitty" or "Kate") graduated as a trainee teacher in Hobart in 1860. At some point she moved to Auckland in New Zealand where, in 1864, she married a rabbitor from Devon who was a friend of Marion's husband-to-be. She died, a widow, in Melbourne in 1914. There was one daughter who pre-deceased her mother.

Alice Emma (familiarily known as "Diana") made a Roman Catholic marriage, 1877, to a surveyor, without surviving issue. She and her husband both died in 1924, and are buried alongside Elizabeth senior in the same cemetery plot in Melbourne. There is no gravestone.

^{xx} Oil portraits of William Fitzmaurice Pierse and Elizabeth Pierse (née Dede) are in the possession of descendants of Amelia in Australia. Neither portrait has any artist's signature or date or other information. It is arguable that both portraits were painted by a convict artist in Tasmania - Elizabeth's from life and WFP's copied from a miniature whose whereabouts are now unknown, although one of Amelia's descendants living in England has a photograph of it.

Peter Hill 07.09.00.