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The Audley Family

By

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During the last two or three years I have been collecting information relating to the family name Audley, at the expense of Mr. George Audley, well known in Liverpool as a generous patron of the arts. I have now exhausted the more obvious sources of information, and constructed a large number of pedigrees. Before these are printed I think it well to publish a brief summary of the results achieved, in the hope that it will cause others who may have knowledge of the family, in any of its branches, to communicate it to me for incorporation.

Abstracts have been obtained of all the Audley wills preserved at Somerset House (all courts), as well as at the provincial probate registries of Chester, Lichfield, Leicester, Peterborough, Northampton, York, Lincoln, Worcester, Hereford, Gloucester, Canterbury, Exeter, Norwich, Lancaster, Ipswich, Bury St. Edmunds and Blanford; and also of all Chancery suits in P.R.O., from the earliest dates, in which Audleys were plaintiffs or defendants. And the registers of the various parishes throughout the country with which the Audleys have been connected have been searched for entries relating to the name.

As regards printed sources, the publications of most of the record-printing societies have been explored; as have also the principal county histories and large numbers of other indexed works and periodicals of a cognate character.

It will be understood that these searches have resulted in the collection of a very large and valuable body of evidence, which it is hoped to preserve in a printed form.

The name of Audley is now distinctly uncommon, and almost all of its present holders are people of humble position in life, from whom it is difficult to obtain much information of their ancestry. I have not been able to construct a pedigree for any living Audley, which goes back further much earlier than 1800. Yet, as I shall presently show, for several centuries down to about 1750 the Audleys were represented in various parts of the country, as landowners, prosperous traders, and professional men. Not a single descendant of any of them in the male line can now be traced; with two exceptions, their families, which for generations had been well represented and even prolific, became extinct, or disappeared into complete obscurity, before the end of the eighteenth century. What is the explanation of this sudden disappearance of the clan, in all its widely scattered branches?

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Below I give a brief list of the principal Audley pedigrees I have constructed, with the dates over which they extend, and an indication of each family's social status. Where characteristic Christian names were in use I have mentioned them, as they often form a guide to kinship. It may be mentioned that the Visitation pedigrees have in several cases been found to connect families, which were, as far as we can tell, unrelated.

1. The Barons Audley. The pedigree of the Barons Audley, of Audley, Staffs., is given in great detail, from the time of Stephen, in G.E.C.'s 'Complete Peerage,' and I cannot pretend to have added much to it. The barony passed into the Tuchet family through the marriage of Sir John Tuchet to Joan, elder dau. of James, 2nd Lord Audley, about the middle of the fourteenth century, and again similarly to the Thicknesse family in 1777. The barony has been in abeyance since the death of George Thicknesse Touchet, 21st Baron Audley, in 1872.
2. Audley of Swaffam, Norfolk. Landowners. Descended from Sir Humphrey A., eldest son of James Tuchet (1398-1459), 5th Lord Audley, by his second marriage to Eleanor Holland. Family continued another five generations, and then became extinct. Characteristic names, Edmund and Philip.
3. Audley of Audley, Staffs. and Nantwich, Cheshire. Small gentry, yeomen and lawyers. Begins with Thomas Tuchet *alias* Audley (d. 1588), evidently related in some way to the family of Lord Audley, members of which are mentioned in his will as parties to deeds with him. Continued as Tuchet *alias* Audley for several generations and then became plain Audley. Of Nantwich from 1702, where family disappears early in nineteenth century. Characteristic names, George and Ralph.
4. Audley of Welborne and Grantham, Lincs; Upwell, Norfolk; and Biggleswade, Bedf. Landowners and traders. Begins definitely with Thomas A. (d. 1562), of Hough, Lincs., who, according to the Visitation pedigrees, was son of William A., of Welborne, and grandson of Thomas A., of Ashbourne, co. Derby, illegitimate son of Lord Audley. Descendants very numerous. Branch which settled at Upwell, about 1720, had its last male representative in Thomas A. (1742-1822?), of Kings Lynn and Bath. Characteristic names, Walter, Anthony, Christopher and Robert.
5. Audley of Earls Colne and Berechurch, Essex. Landowners. Begins definitely with Geoffrey A., of Earls Colne whose family had certainly settled there since about 1480. Thomas Audley (1488?-1544), Lord Audley of Walden, the celebrated Lord Chancellor, son of Geoffrey A., had a brother also named Thomas (d. 1558), who was of Berechurch, where the elder line of his descendants became extinct in 1714. A younger branch represented at Colchester in 1715.
6. Audley of Great Gransden, Hunts, and of Houghton Conquest, Bedf. Landowners. Begins with Henry A. (d. 1545), of London and Great Gransden, whose brother Thomas was of Houghton Conquest, and ancestored both branches. The elder branch, of Great Gransden, carries down to about 1670; the younger branch, of Houghton Conquest, to about 1630. Charactersistic names, Robert, Henry and Lewis.

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7. Audley of Husborne Crawley, Bedf. Yeomen. Begins with William A. (d. 1623), of Husborne Crawley from 1572, or earlier, whose descendants disappear there after 1708.

8. Audley of Roxton, Bedf., and of Huntingdon. Yeomen and professional men. Begins with Edward A. (d. 1632), of Roxton. Sons settled in town of Huntingdon, where family seems to have become extinct in 1758. Characteristic names, Edward and John.

9. Audley of St. Ives, Hunts. Landowners. Begins with Thomas A., who received a grant of manor of St. Ives in 1544. Pedigree of his descendants clear to 1681. After that numerous Audleys in parish, to beginning of nineteenth century, apparently from their names of the same family, but in humble positions and not definitely to be connected. Characteristic names, Robert and Mollineux.

10. Audley of Henlow, Bedf., and of London. Gocers. Begins with Thomas A. (d. 1533), of Henlow, whose sons went into trade in London. No information after 1632. Henlow is only about 6 miles from Hitchin (see next pedigree).

11. Audley of Hitchin, Hertf. Yeomen and maltsters. Consecutive pedigree starts with three brothers, Matthew (d. 1615), George (d. 1602), and Edward A. (d. 1593), but numerous Audleys in parish before them. Descendants of Matthew connected with parish till about 1720. Characteristic names, Matthew, George, Edward, Francis and Hamlet.

12. Audley of Buckingham. Tradesmen. Begins with Thomas A. (*fl.* 1562-74), of Buckingham, who was probably son of John A. (d. 1545), of North Marston, Bucks. Descendants in town till 1733. Characteristic names, Paul, Joseph, Henry and Francis.

13. Audley of Alrewas, Staffs., and of Birmingham. Yeomen and surgeons. Begins with Edward A. (d. 1719), of Alrewas from 1675 or earlier, whose family became extinct in 1782. Characteristic names, John and Edward.

14. Audley of St. Andrew's, Holborn, and of Beccles, Suffolk. Begins with Edward A., a tailor of St. Andrew's, whose descendants were for several generations of Beccles. Dates 1672-1742.

15. Audley of Patrington in Holderness, Yorks. Husbandmen. Begins with Christopher A. (d. 1585), whose descendants disappear there after 1622.

16. Audley of Marlborough, Wilts. Tradesmen. Three generations of Lewis Audleys, 1615-74.

17. Audley of St. Dunstan's in the East. Three generations of London mercers, 1572-1600.

18. Audley of Stepney. Three generations, 1651-1717, of coopers and mariners. Characteristic names, Edward.

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19. Audley of London, and of Rotherhithe, Surrey. Begins with Richard A. (d. 1689), a London cutler, whose son, the Rev. Matthew A. (1679-1725), had a son, another Rev. Matthew A. (1708?-90), whose eleven children mostly died in infancy.

20. Audley of Snettisham, Heacham, Sandringham, East Winch and Kings Lynn, Norfolk. Yeomen. A series of small pedigrees ranging from 1517 to 1732, in which the name Stephen constantly recurs.

21. Audley of Kent. Yeomen. Families of Audley, or Adley, settled at Kingston Bridge, Sturry, and other places near Canterbury, from 1498 to 1821; no consecutive pedigree.

22. Audley of Essex. Farmers and tradesmen. There were Audleys associated with Rayleigh in 1669 and again in the early eighteenth century, as well as with Lexden, Hornchurch, Pitsey, Prittlewell, Ramsden Crays, Bocking and other places in Essex from 1541 onwards, but no consecutive pedigrees.

23. Audley of Westminster and London. Sampson A. (d. 1559), verger of Westminster Cathedral, had a son John Sampson *alias* Audley, a noted London printer, who left another Sampson A. at his death in 1575.

24. Audley of London. Hugh A. (1577-1662), the great usurer, was third son of John A, a London mercer. His wealth founded several families among his sisters' grandchildren, and the great London property of the Duke of Westminster came from him through the marriage of his great-grandniece, Mary Davies, to Sir Thomas Grosvenor, in 1677.

25. Audley of Inistioge, co. Kilkenny. Farmers. Begins with George A. (born probably about middle of eighteenth century), said to have come from England to Inistioge, where his descendants still farm; a younger branch is settled in business in the Potteries. Characteristic names, George, Robert and Charles.

26. Audley of Liverpool. Commercial. Begins with William A. (1776?-1833), and continues down to present day.

I have also record of Audleys in various Devonshire parishes, Branscombe, Exmouth, Littleham, Salcombe, Ottery St. Mary, Plymouth and Wembury at dates between 1558 and 1752.

Among other places where Audleys have been found may be mentioned Newenham by Baldock, Hertf., 1476-1597; Bradford, Wilts., 1588-1633; Seagrave, Rothley and Mountsorrell, Leics., 1676-96; Flecton, Hunts., 1556; Loddington, Leics., 1570; Andover, Hants, 1490; Alvington, Glos., 1565; Carlton, Northants., 1613; Renhold, Bedf., 1618; Dunstable, Bedf., 1519; St. Albans, Hertf., 1545; Richmond, Surrey, 1572; Rochester, Kent, 1804; Birmingham, 1816; Hoo, Suffolk, 1745-55; Scopwicke, Linc., 1689; and, in Middlesex, Edmonton, 1626, Clerkenwell, 1636 and 1792, New Brentford, 1677, and Shadwell, 1782.

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There has been a family of Audsley in the West Riding of Yorkshire, connected with Ossett, Dewsbury, Bradford, Horbury, Wakefield, and other places in that area, since the sixteenth century, but I have not followed it up.

If your readers can help me with further information regarding persons named Audley I shall be much in their debt. There must be many descended from the Audleys through females, of whom, and their husbands, particulars can be supplied to perfect the pedigrees.

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