

Armstrong County

PENNSYLVANIA

HER PEOPLE, PAST AND PRESENT

EMBRACING

A HISTORY OF THE COUNTY

AND

A Genealogical and Biographical Record of Representative Families

IN TWO VOLUMES

ILLUSTRATED

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DR. JOHN GILPIN was the first of his name in Kittanning—a name that has been kept in prominence there ever since his day by his son, John Gilpin, and grandson, Oliver W. Gilpin, in turn, the former one of the foremost attorneys of the Armstrong county bar in his time, the latter now practicing there as a member of the law firm of Buffington and Gilpin. There are few families whose members uniformly display such qualities of leadership. In professional circles the Gilpins have figured among the most distinguished members of the community for three quarters of a century, and none have stood higher for honorable citizenship. They come of a stock which has made this region famous, being descended from Friends who emigrated to Pennsylvania in Provincial days, the ancestors of Dr. John Gilpin moving to Cecil county, Md., where he was born Feb. 24, 1806, a descendant of Samuel Gilpin, founder of the Cecil branch of one of the oldest and most aristocratic families in America. Some accounts of the early family history and lineage show that the Gilpins in England have long been an honored race, striving and achieving, and in view of the fact that so many of the name have shown distinguished ability it is interesting to note that Francis Galton, the English scientific writer, noted for his studies in heredity, in his work on "Hereditary Genius" mentions the Gilpin family as an illustration of his theory of transmission.

The first of the line of whom we have record was Bert de Gylpyn, who came to England in the train of William the Conqueror.

His descendant, Richard de Gylpyn (the name already undergoing slight change), called "Richard the Rider," performed a signal act of bravery in the time of King John, killing the last wild boar of Westmoreland, which had devastated the land and terrified the people. Some time previously, about 1206, he had accompanied the Baron of Kendal, who could neither read nor write, to Runnymede, as his secretary, and in recognition of his heroic act the Baron gave him Kentmere Manor, an estate some four thousand acres in extent in a wild portion of the English lake district, about ten miles distant from Lake Windermere, a "breezy tract of pasture land" as Froissart, the French chronicler, records. Gylpyn thereafter changed his coat of arms from that borne by his forefathers to that having the wild boar upon its shield. This adventure of his, his consequent change of arms, are embodied in an old poem called "Minstrels of Winandermere."

Bert de Gylpyn drew of Normandie
 From Walchelin his gentle blood,
 Who haply hears, by Bewley's sea,
 The Angevins' bugles in the wood,
 His crest, the rebus of his name,
 A pineapple—a pine of gold
 Was it, his Norman shield,
 Sincere, in word and deed, his face extolled.
 But Richard having killed the boar
 With crested arm an olive strook,
 And sable boar on field of or
 For impress on his shield he took.
 And well he won his honest arms,
 And well he knew his Kentmore lands.
 He won them not in war's alarms,
 Nor dipt in human blood his hands.

The arms are those used by the Gilpins to the present day: Or, a boar statant sable, langued and tusked gules. Crest: A dexter arm embowed in armor proper, the naked hand grasping a pine branch fesswise vert. Motto: *Dictis Factisque Simplex*.

On the estate thus acquired rose the stronghold known as Kentmere Hall, walled, towered and turreted, with great manorial inclosures, close by a wild stream which leaps down the mountainside. In the early days a Norman church was built nearby, of rubble stone, with thick walls and Norman arched windows (twelve in number to represent the Apostles, and arranged in groups of three to give honor to the Trinity), and it still stands, near it an enormous yew tree believed by competent judges to have been there since the Conqueror's time. It is girdled by heavy chains and well protected. In this church, in the sixteenth century, preached occasionally Bernard Gilpin (the name gradually assumed

the present form), a younger son of Kentmere Hall. Besides his regular charge, by royal command, he labored throughout the northern counties, among a people classed indiscriminately by Bishop Carlton as "border robbers," and during the troublous times succeeding the death of King Henry VIII. he lifted up his voice continually for the purity of life, sincerity in religion, against all abuses of the clergy of whatever persuasion. By his fearless and unselfish life, following the principle "no place too small to occupy, no people too low to elevate," he won the title "Apostle of the North," and as such is immortalized in ecclesiastical history, for his career has afforded a theme for at least a dozen writers, including Wordsworth and Wesley. Although reared under Catholic influence he embraced the Protestant faith, and "his charities are reminders of the distribution of alms from the monasteries, which had recently been abolished by royal mandate. Almshouses had not yet been established to provide for the poor whose necessities had been hitherto relieved through ecclesiastical charity." One biographer says: "The hospitality and charity of Gilpin were unbounded. Every week on the Thursday he ordered that a very great pot should be provided full of boiled meat for the poor." Twenty-four of the poorest of his people were his constant pensioners. Every Sunday from Michaelmas to Easter he kept open house for all his parishioners; for their entertainment three long tables were provided, one for the gentry, a second for the farmers, a third for the laborers. Like most apostles, Bernard Gilpin was a fearless man, which the following story illustrates: Once upon entering Rothbury Church, in Northumberland, he espied a glove suspended in a conspicuous place as a challenge from some horse trooper of the district. He ordered the verger to remove it, but that worthy, trembling with fear, said he dared not, so the apostle, procuring a long pole, hooked down the challenge himself, and carrying it with him entered the pulpit and began to preach. During the course of his sermon he paused, and lifting the glove to view said: "I hear there is one among you who has even in this sacred place hung a glove in defiance. I challenge him to compete with me in acts of Christian charity." Scott's painting, "Gilpin in Rothbury Church," hangs at Wallington Hall, Northumberland, the seat of Charles Treveilyan, Bart., and this spirited scene is also one of the three subjects composing the Bernard Gilpin memorial window in Durham Cathedral.

During the religious controversies of Queen Mary's reign the "Apostle of the North" was tried on thirteen different accusations, but was liberated by his uncle, the Bishop of Durham. His enemies, however, summoned him before Dr. Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London. While journeying to the metropolis the apostle broke his leg, and before he was sufficiently recovered to appear for trial Queen Mary died, the reformers were in power, and the charges against him withdrawn. Bernard Gilpin established schools and continued to wield a great influence in ecclesiastical circles until he died.

The "Apostle of the North" was one of the three sons of Edwin Gilpin, one of whom was George Gilpin, minister to the Hague during Queen Elizabeth's reign, who was commissioned to form an alliance with the Dutch States against the Spanish, at that time threatening Great Britain with the Armada. In an autograph letter of the Queen carried with him on this mission, Elizabeth writes thus: "Having charged Mr. Gilpin, one of our councilors of State, to deliver this letter, it will not be necessary to authorize him by any other confidence than what is already acquired by a long proof of his capacity and of his fidelity and sincerity, assuring you you may trust in him as in ourselves."

The second son of Edwin Gilpin was William Gilpin, from whom the Maryland branch of the family is descended, and who married Elizabeth Washington, of Hall Heal, the sister of George Washington's great-grandfather.

The estate of Kentmere was increased during the reign of Henry III. by a grant of the Manor of Ulwithwaite to Richard, the grandson of the first of that name.

The history of a family, as of a nation, seems to advance in epochs, and from the time of Elizabeth down to the Commonwealth nothing of importance is to be noted. Then the Kentmere Gilpins succumbed to the forces of Cromwell, and the Hall was demolished by his troops, the tower alone left standing. The head of the house, obliged to flee the country, left his estate in a kind of trust mortgage to a friend, but his heir coming home in the time of quiet was unable to get hold of the proper deeds to the estate, and thus it was lost.

The division of families at that period of civil war is illustrated by the fact that Thomas Gilpin, of Warborough, was colonel in the regiment of Cromwell's Ironsides at the battle of Worcester. Whether as reaction or not from this scene of strife he soon after renounced what his biographer terms "foolish

and wanton delights, as sports and pastimes, music and dancing," and betook himself into the peaceful Quaker fold, where he was a preacher for forty years. His son, Joseph, who came to America after William Penn and who married Hannah Glover, was the founder of the American branch of the family.

Kentmere was thus lost to the Gilpins, after having been in their possession for thirteen or more generations. Dr. Richard Gilpin, after the restoration, bought Scaleby Castle, an estate situated in the adjoining County of Cumberland, not far from Carlisle. This was the third great estate owned by the Gilpin family, and the castle is of much historic interest, standing near the ruin of an old Pict wall. Here again was ruin, for overconfident in thick walls, a double moat, a drawbridge and portcullis, its former owner, Sir Thomas Musgrave, had also held out against Cromwell with the usual result. Repairing, as well as their impoverished fortunes would permit, the castle's gaping walls and battered roof, the Gilpins occupied it for a time, but afterward allowed it to fall into decay and be occupied by their retainers. In course of time the fortunes of Scaleby were recouped by the marriage of a lady of the house to a gentleman by the name of Fawcett, who drained the fields, repaired the castle, built a new portion around three sides of the court and made it a place of beauty for descendants of his name and Gilpin lineage to dwell within.

A second emigration in the Gilpin family took place in 1783, when John Gilpin, son of Rev. William Gilpin, born at Scaleby Castle and vicar at Boldre, came to Philadelphia and married Ann W. Sims of that city. He shortly removed to Nova Scotia, married twice, and had thirteen children, all of whom either settled in British provinces in America or returned to their ancestral homes, so that this branch of the family cannot be considered as part of the American house.

It is frequently difficult in tracing the genealogies of American families to find an unbroken family tree connecting them with their English ancestors. There is usually a ragged break at the date of emigration to America, where links, other than circumstantial, are wholly lost, but the Gilpin annals in both the Old and New World have been so carefully kept that the exact line of descent is followed even unto the present generation in

the United States. The records include extracts from a genealogical chart accompanying a manuscript entitled "Memoirs of Dr. Richard Gilpin, of Scaleby Castle, Cumberland, written in the year 1791 by Rev. William Gilpin, vicar of Boldre, together with an account of the author and a pedigree of the Gilpin family." This manuscript was published in 1879 by the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society. George Gilpin, nephew of the Ambassador to The Hague, also contributed researches concerning the family tree, as did Sir Daniel Flemming, noted in the sixteenth century for his genealogical researches into the history of Westmoreland. Alan Chambre, recorder of Kendal, likewise extended his inquiries into the antiquity of the Gilpin family, and to these are added the genealogical collections at Scaleby Castle.

The American annals of the family have also been most carefully and interestingly compiled by Dr. Joseph Elliot Gilpin. Much of this accuracy is doubtless due to the marked literary attainments for which many members of the family have been distinguished. The Apostle of the North was a prolific and forceful writer, and many of his ecclesiastical essays are held in high esteem. Rev. William Gilpin, M. A., prebendary of Salisbury and vicar of Boldre, in the New Forest, near Lymington, dedicated to Queen Charlotte in 1786 a volume illustrated by himself upon the picturesque beauties of Westmoreland and Cumberland. Rev. William Gilpin is believed to be the original of Dr. Syntax, hero of the delightful tale in verse that describes the adventures of a simple-minded, henpecked clergyman who leaves home in search of the picturesque.

The songs and ballads of Cumberland were edited by Sidney Gilpin, of Derwent Cottage.

The artistic temperament was also, and still continues to be, strongly developed in the family. The pictures of Rev. William Gilpin sold for £3,200, the whole of which he devoted to the establishment of schools in his parish, where his memory is regarded with almost sacred reverence.

Sawry Gilpin, a descendant of Dr. Richard Gilpin, who bought Scaleby Castle, was a member of the Royal Academy, renowned for his paintings of horses and distinguished for the untamed beauty of expression he imparted in his pictures of animals. It was Ann Gilpin, sister of Thomas Gilpin, of Warborough, who married Thomas West and became grandmother of Benjamin West, president of the

Royal Academy. The late Henry Dilworth Gilpin, of Philadelphia, attorney general of the United States under Van Buren, and at one time acting secretary of treasury, possessed the same artistic perceptions. He was a member of the Academy of Fine Arts, and his kinsman, Mr. Jordan Stabler, of Baltimore, is prominently associated with the artistic circles of that city, and his home is beautified by many rare old pictures.

A leaning toward the religious life is indicated by the many divines in the Anglican Church of this blood. Besides the Apostle of the North (who, aside from the Archdeaconry of Durham, refused preferment many times) that list includes several bishops and many of its clergy, not to speak of that fighting Quaker, Thomas of Warborough, who laid down his sword of steel to take up the sword of spirit. In America is included Dean Gilpin of Halifax Cathedral, who is a member of the family. A poet of the period of the Reformation has said concerning the Gilpins: "The race that once went bravely forth to slay the wild boar in his den now meets the bigots in their wrath and boldly claims the rights of men."

Members of the family have become equally distinguished in statesmanship. Queen Elizabeth's minister plenipotentiary to The Hague was a brother to Bernard the Apostle. Col. George Gilpin, son of Joseph and Hannah (Glover) Gilpin, founders of the American branch of the family, held an important government position under George Washington. The late Gov. William Gilpin, of Colorado, did equal service as a statesman in another field. Sent in his boyhood to England, he was a classmate of Gladstone. He also had Hawthorne as his tutor, and returning to the United States he entered West Point, from which institution he was graduated. The spirit of adventure and progress so deeply rooted within the Gilpin family led him to a life of observation and exploration in the West, and embodied in a report brought before Congress in 1845 he called the attention of that body to the immense possibilities and value of the western country of the United States. Bancroft says of Gilpin's report: "Coming just at this time, on the eve of the settlement of the Oregon question, the Mexican war and acquisition of California, its influence and importance cannot be estimated."

Among others of the family noted in public life are Charles Gilpin, three times mayor of Philadelphia; Edward Woodward Gilpin, for many years chief justice of Delaware; and most honored in Baltimore has been the late

President Bernard Gilpin, of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association, who bore the same name as that of the Apostle of the North.