

THE DARCY LEVERS

In only two places of the Lever family tree has the name of Darcy appeared and even these names are written differently. The Lever who died in 1743 was D'Arcy and the one who died in 1839 was Darcy. There is interesting history to be added here.

Because Ashton Lever is a central point of this account it is worthwhile to note the Darcy's relationship to him. The D'Arcy Lever was his father and the Darcy Lever was his nephew.

D'Arcy Lever (1705 - 1742) was born in 1705, educated at Brazenose College, and was made a Doctor of Civil Law in July 1733. His career can be traced in the journals and letters of John Byrom and his family. In July 1723, D'Arcy travelled to London with Byrom by way of Cambridge and Windsor. The journey took a week. They saw the sights of the city together until D'Arcy left to go to College.

The friendship made on their journey to London was kept up through Byrom's life while D'Arcy was at Oxford and later in Manchester. Byrom kept in touch by writing to him. While Byrom was in London he was able to carry out several requests for D'Arcy. For instance he arranged with the Heralds Office to have a copy of the Lever pedigree drawn up. This cost 25 s. Byrom also acquired for him a watch valued at £33.10s, a microscope and an orrery (a clockwork model of the planetary system)

In May 1725 D'Arcy married Dorothy, daughter of the rector of Prestwich, Rev. William Ashton. With his bride came a handsome dowry of £ 4,000 and on the death of his father-in-law, a private chapel in Prestwich Parish Church.¹ The following August when Byrom was in Manchester, D'Arcy spent a day in Byrom's company ending the day at a music meeting. Byrom's sister, Phebe, was evidently a close friend of the Levers.

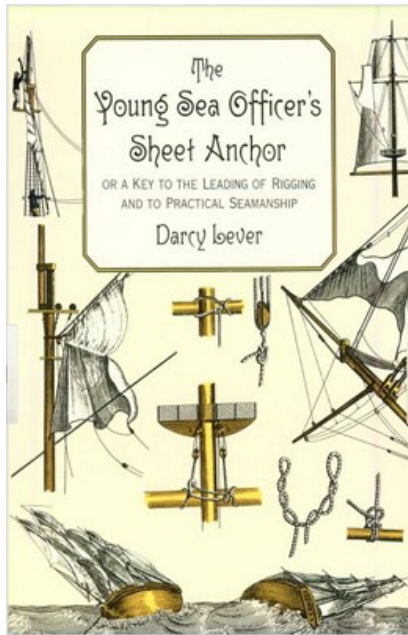
A speculation: At this point in the family tree it is the first time the name "Ashton" appears. Did he receive the name from D'Arcy's wife's maiden name?

D'Arcy Lever was High Sheriff of Lancaster for the year 1736.² And in the following year was knighted. It appears that Darcy went to London in 1735 to receive his promised knighthood. There was malicious rumor about his wasted trip to London but what happened was that the king, George II had spent most of 1736 in Hanover and was returning but was held up by violent storms in the Channel. Consequently Darcy received his knighthood on January 26, 1737. D'arcy died August 15, 1742 and was buried at Prestwick.

D'Arcy had eight children. Four died in infancy and at his death, Ashton, John, Martha and Dorothy were still living. Ashton inherited the estate, John went into the church. Martha married Rev. Greaves and Dorothy married Rev. William Warrington.

Darcy Lever (1759-1839) was born to a [clergyman](#) and lived for many years in the town of [Alkrington](#). He also spent many years in [India](#), working for the [British East India Company](#), earning himself a comfortable income.

Sheet Anchor: Or a Key to the Leading of Rigging and to Practical Seamanship, his only publication, was written as a reference for general use by young officers in the East India Company and the [Royal Navy](#). It is well known for its detailed [engravings](#) that illustrate each concept addressed in the text. ³



Lever had little direct experience with sailing. His book is largely the result of extensive research he conducted himself, including multiple interviews with experienced seamen. The book was first published in 1808 with a second edition in 1819. It is eagerly sought after even today, by model ship builders.³

A first edition changed hands in 1922 for \$1,200.

The book was widely used among young 19th-century officers in the Royal Navy and East India Company, this now-rare volume offers clear definitions and copious illustrations of the principles of rigging and other aspects of seamanship—tacking, use of a compass, splicing ropes, making sails, and much more.

During the [Napoleonic Wars](#) in 1794 Lever served as Adjutant to the North Battalion of the Skyrack Volunteers. On the Treaty of Peace in 1802 all volunteer corps were disbanded but on the renewal of hostilities in 1803, another corps was formed called the Skyrack Infantry.

Darcy was also a great patron of the arts, was considered the first amateur Flautist in Britain and made a name on stage. As an amateur actor he traveled the Yorkshire theatres. His three sons predeceased him. He died unmarried and thus ended the Lever family in the male line.

¹ See chapter on The Lever Chapel.

² See chapter on Memorabilia. There see the High Sheriffs of the County of Lancashire. Mark has this book in his keeping.

³ Mark ordered a copy of this book from Amazon & it will be with other Lever memorabilia.