

## A Record-breaking Dynasty.

The church of All Saints in Branston had a series of six Rectors from the same family of Curtois, covering the period 1680 to 1891, a period of 211 years.

### The Curtois Family

Rector	Instituted	Vacated	Patron
John Curtois MA	1680	1719	Sir Thomas Meres, Knight
John Curtois MA	1719	1768	Rowland Curtois and William Carleston, clerk
Peregrine Harrison Curtois L.L.B	1768	1814	Elisabeth Curtois of Branston
Peregrine Curtois L.L.B	1814	1847	The said Peregrine Curtois
Atwill Curtois B.A.	1847	1868	The said Atwill Curtois
Peregrine Curtois L.L.B	1868	1891	The said Peregrine Curtois

The Curtois family had roots in Lincolnshire going back to the 1500's. Many of the family were ordained in the Church of England. In the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries families were large and members of the Curtois family can be traced to the colonies of Australia and New Zealand, also to the USA. Many had distinguished service in the forces.

In 1570-82 there was a Bishop 'Curtess' of Chichester, an early member of the family. (The name changed in spelling over the years from Curtess to Curtis to Curtois).

The progenitor of the Branston Curtois family was Rowland Curtois born at Lissington in 1626. He became Sheriff of Lincoln in 1657 and Mayor in 1670. He died in 1671.

**Rev. John Curtois** son of Roland was born in 1650 and took up the 'freedom of the city of Lincoln' by birth, as did all his descendants. He was a vicar at Saxby 1676 - 1680 and came to the village of Branston as rector in 1680. A staunch Royalist, he preached in Branston on the Sunday following the death of King Charles II a memorial sermon which aroused considerable comment in the neighbourhood. Three Sundays later he preached the same sermon in Lincoln Cathedral where there <sup>was</sup> many anti-royalists present, and on leaving afterwards he was mobbed by the crowd. His marriage produced two sons and there are records of seven infant deaths. He died at Branston in 1719.

**Rev. John Curtois** born 1689. He succeeded his father as vicar of Branston in 1719. He fathered two daughters and one son, there were five infant deaths. In 1765 as Parish Clerk in collusion with Lord Vere Bertie, Lord of the Manor of Branston residing at Branston Hall he petitioned Parliament for the Enclosure of the common land of the parish. This included large tracts of undrained fen. The church at this time received tithes from the commoners. The petition was granted and a meeting was held at the Bertie Arms in Hall Lane. The adjudicators appointed by Parliament were Christopher Neville, Charles Chaplin and Edward Wilkes, local gentry of Lincolnshire. Most of the land went to Lord Bertie, the church received tracts of land in lieu of tithes. The land considerably increased in value later in the century when the fens were drained. John died at Branston in 1768.

**Rev. Peregrine Harrison Curtois Lib.** Born 1733 at Branston, he was Rector of Nocton and Potterhanworth before succeeding his father as Rector of Branston in 1768. He raised two daughters and one son. He built a new large Rectory later named Hainton House beside Church Lane to the west of the church. When Lord Bertie died he took over the patronage of the cock fighting fraternity in Lincoln. This 'sport' was very popular at this time and most drinking houses in Lincoln had a cockpit. The major meetings

were on Shrove Tuesday and at Christmas. Peregrine had a cockfighting pit in the garden of the Rectory to the east of the church and its outline is still visible in the lawn. He died at Branston in 1814.

**Rev. Peregrine Curtois** born at Branston Rectory in 1775. He was Rector of Potterhanworth 1801 - 1847 and succeeded his father at Branston in 1815. He erected the church vestry in 1836 for use as a schoolroom for 60 girls. He also erected Longhills House in 1838 the cost of this building was £40,000 a considerable sum for the time, on the site of a much earlier dwelling. There were four daughters and two sons. He died at Longhills in 1847.

**Rev. Atwell Curtois J.P.** born at Branston Rectory 1809. He succeeded his father as Rector in 1847. He owned 504 acres of land valued at £808. He fathered seven daughters and four sons. In 1864 he rebuilt the chancel of All Saints. The eldest daughter Mary, was an excellent artist and exhibited her paintings under the name of Dering Curtois. The fourth daughter, Ella Rose, born 1860 was a talented sculptress and in 1900, helped her father to carve the chancel screen in the church. The screen was destroyed in the fire of 1962. Ella spent most of her life in Paris but on her death in 1944 she bequeathed all her fortune to the Usher Gallery in Lincoln for the building of a much needed extension. The extension was opened in 1959 by her cousin Rev. Peregrine A. Curtois M.A, T.D. The Rev. Atwell Curtois died at Longhills in 1868. His widow spent the rest of her days in Washingborough Hall where she died in 1898.

**Rev. Peregrine Curtois Llb** born in Branston 1806. Curate at Welney, Walpole St Peter and Cranwell before succeeding his brother as Rector of Branston in 1868. In 1874 he owned 1121 acres of land receiving rents of £1,680. He fathered seven sons and four daughters. In 1873 he donated a piece of land on the High Street for the erection of the village school.

With the death of Peregrine Curtois in 1891 the long family line of Rectors of Branston came to an end.

## A Record-breaking Dynasty.

The church of All-Saints <sup>in Branston</sup> had a series of <sup>Six</sup> Rectors from the same family of Curtors for ~~21 years~~, covering the ~~period~~ 1680 to 1891, a period of 211 years.

The Curtors family had roots in Lincolnshire going back to the 1500s, many of the family were ordained in the Church of England. In the ~~15th~~ fifteenth to ~~19th~~ nineteenth centuries families were large and members of the Curtors family can be traced to the colonies of Australia and New Zealand, also to the USA. <sup>and</sup> Many had distinguished service in the forces. [In 1570-82 there was a Bishop Curtess of <sup>Chichester</sup> ~~Diocese~~ an early member of the family. (The name changed in spelling over the years from Curtess to Curtis to Curtors).

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Rev John Curtors <sup>son of Rowland</sup> was born in 1650 and took up the freedom of the city of Lincoln by birth, as did all his descendants. He was vicar at Saxby 1676-1680 and came to the village of Branston as rector in 1680. His marriage produced two sons and there are records of seven infant deaths. He died at Branston in 1719.

Rev John Curtors born 1689. He succeeded his father as vicar of Branston in 1719 (at his death). He fathered two daughters and one son, there were five infant deaths. In 1765 in collusion with Lord Vere Bertie, Lord of the Manor of Branston residing at Branston Hall he petitioned Parliament for the Enclosure of the common land of the parish, this included large tracts of undrained fen. The church at this time received tithes from the commoners. The petition was granted and a meeting was held at the Bertie

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Rev. Atwell Curteis J.P. born at Branston rectory 1809. He succeeded his father as rector in 1847. He owned 504 acres of land valued at £805. He fathered seven daughters and four sons. In 1864 he rebuilt the chancel of All Saints. The eldest daughter, Mary, was an excellent artist and exhibited her paintings under the name of 'Dering Curteis'. The fourth daughter, Ella Rose, born 1860 was an <sup>talented</sup> ~~excellent~~ sculptress and, in 1900, helped her father to carve the chancel screen in the church. The screen was destroyed in the fire of 1962. Ella spent most of her life in Paris but on her death

in 1944 she bequeathed all her fortune to the Usher Gallery in Lincoln for the building of a much-needed extension. The extension was opened in 1959 by her cousin Rev. Peregrine A. Custors M.A., T.D. The Rev Atwill Custors died at Longhills in 1868. His widow spent the rest of her days in Washborough Hall where she died in 1898.

Rev Peregrine Custors H.B. born in Branston 1806. Curate at Welney, Welpole St Peter and Cranwell before succeeding his brother as Rector of Branston in 1868. In 1874 he owned 1121 acres of land receiving rents of £1680. He fathered seven sons and four daughters. In 1873 he donated a piece of land on the High Street for the erection of the village school.

With the death of Peregrine Custors in 1891 the long family line of rectors of Branston came to an end.

## The Curtois Rectors of Branston 1680 - 1891

<u>Rector</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>Wife</u>
John sn	1680 - 1719	39yr.	Branston Rectory	Susanna Grove
John jn.	1719 1768	48yr	Branston Rectory	Elizabeth Johnson
Peregrine Harrison Curtois	1768 1815	47yr	Built the new Rectory c 1760's ie 'Hainton House'	Barbara Bagge
Peregrine II	1815 1847	33yr	1826 lived at Longhills, and rebuilt it c 1838	Anne Winter
Atwill	1847 1868	22yr	Longhills	Anne Lee-Warner
Peregrine III	1868 1891	23yr	Lived in Branston Rectory from 1871	Mary Strong

The incumbency of Branston Church passed from father to son until it reached Atwill Curtois who died in 1868. It then went to his brother Peregrine III, who died in 1891. The Rev. F S Adams became the next rector from 1892 - 97.

Joan Mills - MARCH 2012