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**About Our Ancestors**  
**by Frances M. Smith (Eleanor Lexington)**

## **COURTENAY**

One of the most illustrious families of Ancient France and England is that of Courtenay. The family in Ireland produced the ancestors of one American line, the descendants of which claim descent from a ducal house, that of the Dukes of Devonshire.

The name may be derived from that of the town of Courtenay, in Gatinois, France. There was a family there, the Lords Of Courtenay. Crossing over into England, they retained the name Courtenay.

In 1150, Pierre, the youngest son of King Louis VI of France, married Elizabeth, daughter of Renaud, the last Lord of Courtenay. Their eldest son, Pierre, was the founder of the short-lived dynasty of the Emperors of Constantinople, which ended in 1261.

With William of Normandy, in 1066, were knights of the house of Courtenay, who founded the family in Great Britain. The first Earl of Devon was Hugh de Courtenay. He was one of the 300 knighted by Edward I for gallantry displayed in the Scottish wars. His son Hugh married Margaret, daughter of the Earl of Hereford and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Edward III. The family name of the Earl was de Bohun.

The son of Hugh and Margaret was Sir Philip Courtenay, of Powderham, who married Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Wake. Sir Philip's son, Sir John Courtenay, married Joan, daughter of Sir Alexander Champernown. Going down the line a few hundred years we meet with the Norreys and the Seymour families, progenitors of the American lineage of Seymour.

Sutton-Courtenay, in Berkshire, is a present-day home of a branch of the family.

In 1791, the Courtenays made a settlement at Charleston, S.C. This was Edward Courtenay's choice of a home, while his brother, John, went to Savannah, Ga.

They were sons of Edward Courtenay of Newry. About the middle of the last century, the Mayor of Charleston was William Ashmead Courtenay, a descendant of Edward the colonist.

Earlier than the settlements in South Carolina and Georgia, or in 1762, Hercules Courtenay, born in Ireland, came to Philadelphia, later, removing to Baltimore, where in 1774 he was one of the committee of safety. His career furnishes a splendid record for his posterity, for he lost no time in serving his adopted country to the very best of his ability. He became Captain of the First Pennsylvania Regular Artillery. He was authorized by Congress to sign bills of credit and at the close of the war he was both Town and Street Commissioner and President of the first City Council. The first ship built at Baltimore was launched for him and bore his name. Can one have an ancestor better worth annexing to the family tree?

When scanning the horizon for a spouse to share his joys and sorrows and be his better half his thoughts turned toward Philadelphia, and thither he sped, returning to Baltimore with his bride, Sarah Dewey [sic. should be Sarah Drury]. After her death he married Mary, his wife's sister. His children numbered eight or more. A son, Henry, took to wife Isabella Purviance, and following his father's example after her death he married her sister, Elizabeth, that is, a half sister.

Among soldiers of an early day are Charles and John Courtney (thus spelled) of Virginia, who were good fighters in 1774.

In 1776, besides Captain Hercules Courtenay, already mentioned, there was Lieutenant Philip Courtenay, of Virginia. He served from 1779 until 1781. There also were plenty of the Courtenay boys in the rank and file.

The Pomeroy and the Courtenays long ago began a relationship in the old world. There, in the fifteenth century, Elizabeth, daughter of Henry de la Pomeray (thus spelled), married Humphrey Courtenay. Thomas Pomeroy, Elizabeth's brother, is credited with being the forebear of the colonial ancestor of the American Pomeroy, or Eltweed Pomeroy.

The blazon of the Courtenay armorial quite complete with arms crest and motto is:  
Arms: Or, three torleaux.

Crest: Out of a ducal coronet or, a plume of seven ostrich feathers argent.

Motto: Quod verum, tutum - "What is true is safe."

The heraldic colors are gold, red and silver. A torleau is read.

Other family mottoes are: Ubi Lapsus? Quid feci? - "Where have I fallen? What have I done?"

One branch of the Courtenay family quarters the arms of the de Bohun family, or the Earl of Hereford and Essex, through the marriage already mentioned of Lady Margaret de Bohun and Hugh de Courtenay. The de Bohun crest is swan's feathers, with swans for supporters.