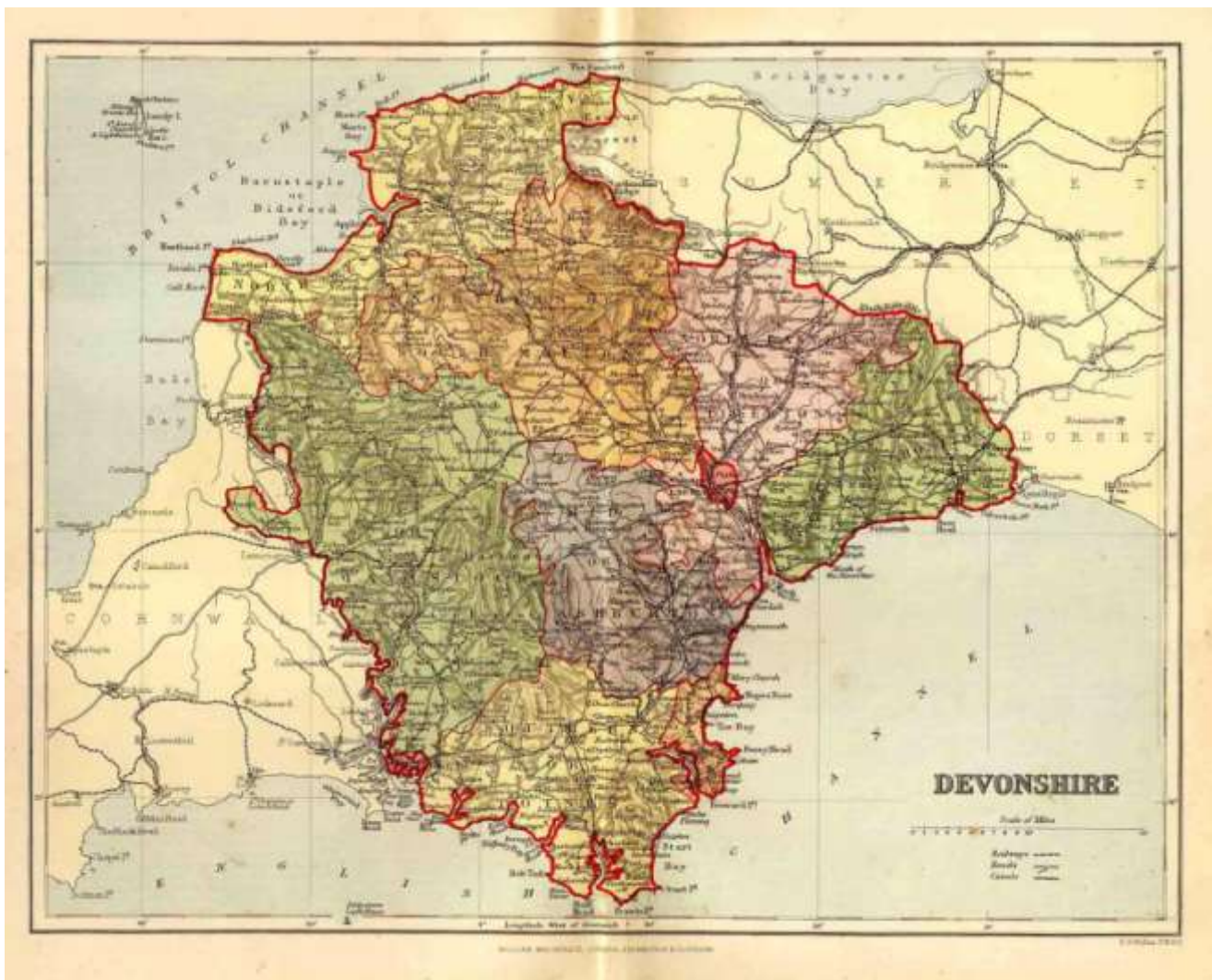


VANSTONE



A History of the Vanstones in New Zealand

Part 1 Introduction

A combination of personal research and the research of others - particularly Adrienne Vanstone-Pegler, Barbara Moore and the late Arnold Stanbury, but also Bob Wilks, Cath Carr, Glenwyn Archer, Jan Fletcher, Lizzie Dinawi, Rebecca Lock - put together in an attempt to tell the story of the Vanstone family in New Zealand and in their homeland. More records are becoming available all the time and there is much more to learn about our Vanstone family.

This is the second instalment, following a first attempt in 2009.

June 2011



Carol Bell with her children Donna and Mark, 2010

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**Carol Bell
55 Jellicoe Street
Timaru 7910
New Zealand
03 684 7733
carolbel@es.co.nz**



Adrienne Vanstone-Pegler in Devon 29 July 1992 and with the Vanstone family bible in 1999



Adrienne Vanstone-Pegler and Carol Bell on a day out in Plymouth, Devon 28 September 2000

Foreword

In the 12th and 13th centuries the majority of Englishmen lived outside the cities in the countryside and their wealth was gained from agriculture. Some owned large estates, others smaller ones and they were divided up into manors. Each manor had a lord who controlled and exercised jurisdiction in his manorial court over his tenants. If he was very wealthy he could own a number of manors in many of the different counties of England. The land would be ploughed by oxen and was divided into long narrow strips to be worked. They were scattered around the various parishes of each county.

Just as the Romans gave New Year gifts to each other of dried dates or figs, the Anglo Saxons gave presents as well. A husband would give his wife "pin money" a yearly allowance and depending on his wealth it would be pins of bone, boxwood, ivory, silver or gold.

Picture in your mind what it was like to live, say, in the early 1700s. Queen Anne was on the throne, then from 1714, George I. A country man would wear doublet and hose, a countrywoman an ankle-length dress with apron and her arms would be completely covered with long sleeves. We take for granted so many things today, but in George II's reign from 1727 tea, coffee and chocolate were only being introduced and coffee houses started to appear in London. Out in the countryside tenants gave their landlords a gift of a capon (a large chicken) or a pomander – an orange with cloves stuck in it for hanging in your cupboard or drawers with your clothes. Our Vanstones, being of humble beginnings and farm labourers in the main, had written into their Vanstones tenement agreement of 1770 that at Christmas they give their landlord a large capon or 1/- and two best beasts from their tenement, and lastly that a member of their family work in the manor house at Dowland, of which there were three. Their annual rent for working the land was £2 1s 0d.

In the 1700s our family were living at Upcott, a tiny hamlet about half a mile from the village of Dowland. The church was St Peter's and was built around 1100. The oldest church records of births, deaths and marriages date from 1592 but are of such poor quality that they are extremely difficult to read. It is from 1742 that full records are legible in the Devon Record Office and as our family takes shape from these records you realise how they moved from village to village to find work at Winkleigh, Iddesleigh, Buckland Filleigh, Shebbear, Broadwoodkelly, Dolton, Meeth, Monk Okehampton, Honeychurch, Sampford Courtney, South Tawton, Ugborough, Yealmpton, East Stonehouse, Devonport and then my grandfather Richard James Vanstone and his younger brother Francis emigrating to Banks Peninsula, New Zealand.

Some were luckier than others and were able to apprentice themselves to tradesmen to learn carpentry and joinery, tool making, cordwainers (boot and shoe makers), millers, blacksmiths and some were just humble agricultural labourers. In later life some were publicans and even owned or leased their farms. Whatever our ancestors did to earn a living, it was, in the main, hard physical work and mostly outdoors. The first tithe map of 1838 states of the Vanstones Tenement that 15 acres were still left and leased from the landlords the Northcote family, but at this time no Vanstones still worked the land.

The original cottage that our Vanstones leased at Upcott, Dowland stood until the late 1800s. I believe it burnt down. It looked out to the north hills of Dartmoor in the south. It was gentle rolling countryside with spectacular views, however from what I have seen of the soil, it was of poor quality. Under the topsoil it's mostly clay, therefore in winter the water doesn't soak in very well and during the winter months the fields on the level are water-logged. Perhaps it's for this reason our ancestors left Upcott, Dowland so early on in our family's history in Devon, England.

Adrienne Vanstone-Pegler
Paignton
Devon