

# The Calverley Family before 1550 - Leon

(0:16 - 8:25)

Welcome to this episode of the Calverley Old Hall podcast. My name is Leon and in this edition of the podcast we, yes me and you, will be going back in time through multiple centuries and we will be covering the history of the Calverley family all the way up to the year of the 1550s: How the history of the family has shaped what the Old Hall used to be and what it is now, and of course, the history of the family. So, without further ado, let's get straight into it.

So, the history starts in the 14th century in the early 1300s with the Calverley family moving to the small quaint commuter settlement in between Bradford and Leeds called Calverley. Fun fact, however, for all you fun fact fans, the Calverley family weren't always called the Calverleys. In fact, they used to be called the Scots and when they moved to Calverley from Scotland, they actually renamed their names to the Calverleys.

How ironic is that? I mean, that is some commitment to moving from place to place and it's very interesting for real. I mean, imagine moving somewhere and then changing your last name to that place.

You know what, when they were changing the documents, that must have been a painstaking process. But, you know, you might be asking the question right now in your head, why did they move? You know, Scotland's quite a nice place to live.

Well, there are multiple factors that we can assume. We don't know for certain, but we can assume on why they potentially moved. The first one being that at that time, this was the early 1300s and the English and the Scottish did not get along well and there was a lot of conflict between the two countries.

So, obviously, no one wants to be involved in conflict, so they could have moved because of that. The reason that actually backs up that is, this was around the same, similar time as William Wallace's rebellion in Scotland. So, as I said, it backs up that point.

And then the second point being that the Calverleys actually had a pretty solid relationship with the monarchy. And at that time, London wasn't the capital and the monarchy didn't live in London. They actually lived in York, which was, back then, the capital of England.

So, we can almost assume that they would have wanted to move to somewhere closer to York, i.e. Calverley, which is only about an hour away. So, you know, it's kind of like moving to a friend's so you can hang out with them. Well, it's very similar to that sort of thing.

But what about the actual family members? Well, that is a good question to ask and we are going to start with some juicy family history. And the first notable family member we can cover today is Sir Walter Calverley I.

The reason I say the first is that there are actually multiple Walters and multiple Williams within this story because they like to name their sons the same. So, expect that to be a common trait across the entire story.

But anyways, Sir Walter Calverley I was actually known as a pioneer of the iron industry, which in the year of the 1300s, that's a very important and respectable job.

And back then, the better your job you had, the more respected you are. Kind of like their social media following. But despite his role within the iron industry and his fat paychecks, he wasn't a stranger with the law and he got in trouble quite often.

He was a troublemaker. And back then, fines were the most common way of being punished. And obviously, if you've got a lot of fines, that's a lot of money to pay, which I think you can kind of get the idea.

Those fines piled up, you had more and more debt to pay off to the government and therefore the family went into the red financially. However, his son, his son, Walter Calverley II, he was the polar opposite. You know, he was planning, he was cunning and he was very careful, especially when it came to the legal system.

And you know what? This guy actually planned out his children's marriages when they were teenagers. I mean, imagine being like 13, 14, even 15 years old and you've got your whole life planned out in front of you.

You know what? It does sometimes feel like that nowadays, but it just shows how different it was back then because that was normalised. That was a normality.

It just shows how much we've evolved and adapted as society has gone on. But yeah, as I said, Sir Walter I's mishaps led the family into financial difficulty. They were pretty much bankrupt.

So Walter II, being the cunning, being the careful, being the planning guy he is, he actually took all the family's affairs onto his shoulders. He sorted them all out, he put the family financially back into the green again, and everyone became happy. Yay, happy ending.

Or is it? Keep watching because you need to watch this space.

We can now jump a whole century to the year of the 1480, where the story actually continues with who we are going to call William Calverley I.

He actually expanded the house, the old hall, and built a new hall, which was thought to be reserved for the family's private use. This entails that the family would have had their own part of the house exclusive to them, and that the maids and the servants who worked for the family were in a separate part of the house, completely separate. And the really cool thing is that the new hall is still fully intact to this day, and pretty much proves, gives us solid evidence that this actually happened.

So, if you want to know more about the building's history, and just in general the building itself, please do make sure to give Kevin's episode a watch because trust me, you do not want to miss it.

Back to the story now, and the main reason why he had the extension constructed was to allow his family to leave more space, which would have shown their status as a rich, very

respectable family, because they could afford to have lots of space. And as I said, the more money you had back then, the more important of a person you were.

The history now leads to Sir Walter Calverley III, who, if you can guess by the name, was actually knighted by King Henry VIII. You know, the big fat monarch that had six wives and killed the majority of them. Yeah, that guy.

And Walter III and the King, they were close, they were no friends you could even say. And Walter even fought in the Battle of the Scots, which I mean, I mean that is some way to change upon your past. That's not the point though, they used to be really good friends between Walter and the King, but that all changed when the King outlawed Catholicism because he was forbidden from marrying Katherine of Aragon.

Which, if you think that is a completely wild concept, I mean, imagine you've been forbidden to marry someone so you retaliate by banning a whole religion. That is wild, I cannot even lie. But there's a little bit of a problem with that.

You see, the Calverleys, they were devout Catholics, and as you can expect, they did not want to change their religion. They refused, the King said, they refused his religious reforms. So, as you can guess, they got punished.

This led to many fines again, and the family were back into the red financially. In fact, Walter III's son, William II, he actually got arrested and locked up in the Tower of London. However, William, you know, he apologised.

He wrote a pamphlet to the King, basically apologising, pledging his allegiance to the King, and decided to obey his religious reforms. This meant that he was released, knighted in the year 1545, and in 1549 served as a Sheriff of York when King Edward VI reigned. This guy even married twice, and had 17 children.

Wow, that is a lot of children. And obviously, when you've got a lot of kids, you need a lot of space, so he added a further lodging block to the old hall building.

And that is where we can stop this episode. I know, I know, I know, time flies fast when you're having fun. But, do not be in dismay, because if you want to find out more about the Calverley family, and most importantly, what happens next, be sure to check out Haaris' and Hamza's episode, where they talk about what happens after 1550.

But, thanks for listening to this episode of the Calverley Old Hall Podcast, and have a great rest of your day.