

The Forths, Winthrops and America

SAMPLE

Chapter 3

During the 15th century the Forths of Hadleigh became very wealthy clothiers, possessing property in London, Suffolk and Essex. Redistribution of land following the Dissolution of the monasteries gave one of them the opportunity to become a landed gentleman in the Sandlings Triangle. Towards the end of the 16th century a Forth marriage led to the birth of a daughter whose marriage to a Winthrop had a profound influence on the future United States of America. The families held the same religious beliefs.

For family historians the challenge of tracing back generations of ancestors is an almost addictive task. For local historians the trail also runs forward; wills, parish records, manorial documents and indentures are key sources of information about ordinary folk and gentry alike. Additionally, gentry families with coats of arms were visited by College Heralds in order to update the births, deaths and marriages recorded in their voluminous *Visitations*. Other contemporary sources, such as court cases and correspondence, need to be used in conjunction with these, as even the Heralds occasionally slipped up.



Window in Groton church, Suffolk, commemorating the marriage of John Winthrop and Mary Forth in 1605.

SAMPLE