

# ORIGINS



@ilberfosse  
of  
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2. THE WILBERFOSS /  
WILBERFORCE ARMS



3. PLAN OF BRIGHAM, 1783, SHOWING THE FISHOLME ESTATE THEN HELD BY WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

The Wilberforce family trace their origins to a certain Ilger of Wilberfoss who married Margaret Kyme, daughter of Walter Kyme who held the manor of Wilberfoss near York from the Percy family in the early 13th century. The descendants of Ilger took their surname from the village of Wilberfoss where the senior line continued to live until the mid 18th century. The branch that settled at Beverley usually spelt their surname Wilberforce from the late 16th century.



1. ST MARY'S CHURCH, BEVERLEY

Thomas, the youngest son of William Wilberfoss, left the family home and settled as a merchant in Beverley by 1562. Seven of his children were baptised at St Mary's church over the next ten years. In 1571 Thomas Wilberforce purchased the manor of Fisholme, in Brigham parish, five miles south-east of Driffild and close to the river Hull. His eldest son William and grandson Ralph (died 1655) lived at Fisholme. Ralph's wife was a Roman Catholic and perhaps they chose to live in this isolated location to avoid persecution.

In his will made in 1534 Christopher Wilberfoss, gentleman, requested to be buried in the parish church at Wilberfoss and he left 4 shillings for the 'mending of the organs'. He also left money to the 'Lady prioress' and 'her sisters' of the Benedictine nunnery that stood near to the parish church. To his eldest son William he left his 'greatest brasse pot', a Flanders chest, a lead cistern, a pair of malt querns, a violet gown, a 'chamlett' dublet and a horse.

1. ST MARY'S CHURCH, BEVERLEY  
Members of the Wilberforce family were baptised, married and buried at St Mary's church, Beverley from the mid 16th to the late 18th century.

2. THE WILBERFOSS/ WILBERFORCE ARMS  
In 1584 Roger Wilberfoss of Wilberfoss provided the Somerset Herald from the College of Arms with a pedigree going back 18 generations and proof of his right to have a coat of arms. The family arms are a black eagle with its wings outstretched on a silver background.

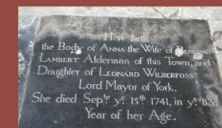
3. PLAN OF BRIGHAM, 1783, SHOWING THE FISHOLME ESTATE THEN HELD BY WILLIAM WILBERFORCE (East Riding Archives and Local Studies Service)  
A moated site near Fisholme Barn is all that survives of the Wilberforces' manor house.

4. WILBERFOSS MEMORIAL IN ST MARY'S CHURCH, BEVERLEY (David Neave) No memorials to any of William Wilberforce's direct ancestors can be seen in St Mary's church today but there is an inscription commemorating a member of a branch of the Wilberfoss family who settled as merchants in York in the 17th century.

5. HALL OR CHURCH FARM, WILBERFOSS (Yorkshire Architectural and York Archaeological Society)  
The Wilberfoss family lived in this 17th-century farmhouse that stood on the site of the Benedictine nunnery which they purchased in 1636. The house was demolished in 1949.

6. THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, WILBERFOSS (David Neave)  
The Wilberfoss family were benefactors to their parish church and did not welcome the changes brought about by the Reformation. For failure to deface Catholic fittings in the church and churchyard Roger Wilberforce was imprisoned in York Castle in 1571.

## WILBERFOSS/WILBERFORCE FAMILY TREE



4. WILBERFOSS MEMORIAL IN ST MARY'S CHURCH, BEVERLEY



5. HALL OR CHURCH FARM, WILBERFOSS



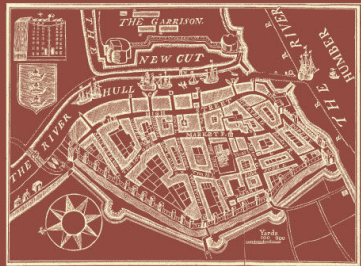
6. THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, WILBERFOSS



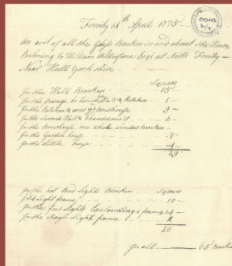
# HULL MERCHANTS & EAST RIDING LANDOWNERS



20. ASTON HALL, NORTH FERRYBY

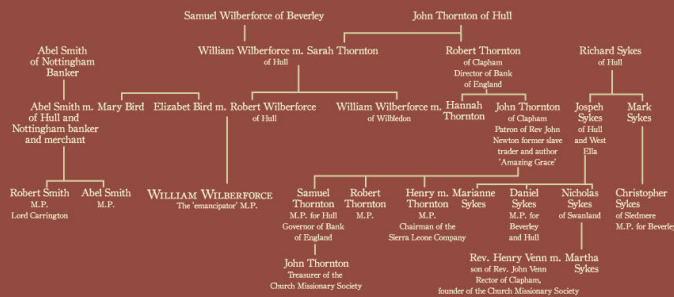


13. PLAN OF HULL BY THOMAS GENT, 1735



14. BROKEN GLASS, 1775

## 15. MERCHANT CONNECTIONS



**William Wilberforce** born in Beverley in 1690, the son of Samuel and Anne Wilberforce, was apprenticed to John Thornton, merchant, of Hull. Thornton, a major exporter of cloth and lead, lived at 25 High Street, Hull, now known as Wilberforce House. In 1711 William Wilberforce married his master's daughter, Sarah Thornton.

Originally in partnership with his father-in-law, Wilberforce became the leading merchant trading between Hull and the Baltic. He served as Mayor of Hull in 1722 and 1740. William Wilberforce was already living at 25 High Street when he bought the house in 1732. He remained there until 1755 when he transferred the house and business to his son Robert and

retired to his country house at North Ferryby. Robert, who married that year, enlarged and altered the High Street house and it was here that his son William Wilberforce, the emancipator, was born in 1759.

Many Hull merchants, such as the Sykes and Broadleys, invested in country estates and although the Wilberforce family did not become landed gentry they had purchased land in several East Riding parishes by the later 18th century. William Wilberforce inherited property at Beverley, manors at Fisholme, in Brigham parish, at Etherdwick, in Aldbrough parish and at Coniston, in Swine parish, and over 500 acres at Riplingham.



16. WILBERFORCE HOUSE, HULL



17. STAIRCASE



18. WILBERFORCE ARMS



19. SUN FIRE POLICY

13. PLAN OF HULL BY THOMAS GENT, 1735  
At the top left-hand corner of the plan is a drawing of the large Lime Street Sugar Refinery erected c. 1730 by Godfrey Thornton of London (merchant and Director of the Bank of England), William Thornton of Hull, and their brother-in-law William Wilberforce, who was an executor of Richard Sykes, who had owned the site. The raw sugar was evidently imported, via London, from the slave plantations in the West Indies.

14. AN ACCOUNT OF ALL THE GLASS BROKEN IN AND ABOUT THE HOUSE BELONGING TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE AT NORTH FERRYBY, 1775 (East Riding Archives and Local Studies Service)

15. MERCHANT CONNECTIONS  
The merchant families of Hull were closely connected through business and marriage. The Wilberforce family's alliances were chiefly with the Thornton, Sykes and Smith families. The Thornton connection was particularly influential in William Wilberforce's life.

16. WILBERFORCE HOUSE, 25 HIGH STREET, HULL  
Built c. 1660 for Hugh Lister, the house was bought by the tenant John Thornton in 1709. It was owned by the Wilberforce family from 1732 until 1830 when it was sold by William Wilberforce. Established as a museum in 1906, it re-opened as Britain's first Slavery Museum in 2007.

17. STAIRCASE AT WILBERFORCE HOUSE (Wilberforce House)  
In the late 1750s Robert Wilberforce added a rear wing including this magnificent staircase with the family arms displayed in the plasterwork.

18. THE WILBERFORCE ARMS ABOVE THE STAIRCASE WINDOW (Wilberforce House)

19. COPY OF THE SUN FIRE OFFICE POLICY FOR WILBERFORCE HOUSE 1805 (Wilberforce House)

20. ASTON HALL, NORTH FERRYBY (Edward Waterson)  
William Wilberforce, senior, purchased a house at North Ferryby in 1744. It was rebuilt in the early 19th century and was later known as Aston Hall. The house was demolished in 1970.



21. THE YOUNG WILLIAM WILBERFORCE BY ARTHUR DEVIS. (Pocklington School)  
It is said that Wilberforce, when at Pocklington School, sent a letter to a York newspaper condemning the slave trade which he referred to as 'the odious traffic in human flesh'.

22. THE ROOM IN WILBERFORCE HOUSE IN WHICH WILLIAM WILBERFORCE WAS BORN. Painting by T. Tindall Wildridge. (Wilberforce House)

23. EARLY 16th-CENTURY FONT IN HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, HULL where William Wilberforce was baptised. (Wilberforce House)

24. HULL GRAMMAR SCHOOL attended by William Wilberforce 1766-68. The master, the Revd Joseph Milner, a leading evangelical, and his brother Isaac, later Dean of Carlisle, who for a short time served as usher at the school, were lifelong friends and spiritual advisers to Wilberforce.

25. THE CHILDREN OF JOSEPH SYKES OF WEST ELLA BY R.E. PINE, 1766. (Sir Tatton Sykes Bt.)  
The young William Wilberforce was a frequent visitor to West Ella Hall, and Joseph Sykes acted as his guardian after his father's death. Here William had the companionship of the many Sykes children.

26. MARIANNE SYKES PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE CHALMERS AT HULL. (Sir Tatton Sykes Bt.)  
Marianne Sykes, daughter of Joseph Sykes of West Ella, married William Wilberforce's second cousin and fellow anti-slavery campaigner, Henry Thornton.

William Wilberforce was born on 24 August 1759 at 25 High Street, Hull (now Wilberforce House) and a month later was baptised at Holy Trinity Church.

He was the only son of Robert Wilberforce, merchant, and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Bird of Barton on the Heath, Warwickshire, a wealthy silk manufacturer.

William was a delicate child, small for his age and rather puny. He had bad eyesight but was bright and intelligent and at the age of seven he became a day

pupil at Hull Grammar School. In May 1768 William's father Robert died, aged only 40. He was buried in St Mary's Church, Beverley alongside his mother and grandmother. Soon afterwards William was sent to stay with his Aunt Smith at Nottingham and then more permanently with his uncle William Wilberforce in London. The elder William had married his cousin Hannah, sister of John Thornton, the leading evangelical layman and friend and patron of the Revd John Newton, former slave trader and author of 'Amazing Grace'.

To the horror of his mother and grandfather William came under Methodist influence at his uncle and aunt's house, so in 1771 he was taken

away and placed at Pocklington School under the care of the Revd Kingsman Baskett 'an elegant though not deep scholar of gentlemanly mind and manners'. William remained there for five years before entering St John's College, Cambridge.

His holidays from school and university were divided between visits to his mother in Hull, his grandfather at North Ferriby, and the home of his guardian Joseph Sykes at West Ella. He later noted in his autobiography that holidays were a time of 'utter idleness & dissipation; uninterrupted series ... of suppers, cards, assemblies, concerts, plays, and for (the) two last years with the girls all the morning – Religion gradually wearing away till quite gone.'

21. THE YOUNG WILLIAM WILBERFORCE BY ARTHUR DEVIS.

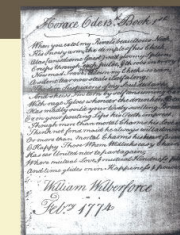
# THE YOUNG WILBERFORCE



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22. THE ROOM IN WILBERFORCE HOUSE IN WHICH WILLIAM WILBERFORCE WAS BORN.



23. FONT IN HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, HULL



24. HULL GRAMMAR SCHOOL



25. THE CHILDREN OF JOSEPH SYKES



26. MARIANNE SYKES

27. POCKLINGTON SCHOOL IN THE 1850s. The old school and master's house where Wilberforce lodged were pulled down and rebuilt in 1818, and the building was altered and greatly enlarged in 1850.

28. SALLY ARNUP WORKING ON A STATUE OF WILLIAM WILBERFORCE AS A SCHOOLBOY. (Pocklington School) The statue cast in bronze is to be unveiled at Pocklington School by the Archbishop of York on 22 September 2007.

29. AN ODE BY HORACE TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM WILBERFORCE WHEN AT POCKLINGTON SCHOOL IN 1774. (Bodleian Library, Oxford) He is said to have 'greatly excelled all the other boys in his compositions'.