

---

## Maximizing Probate Research: An Analysis of Potential, Using English Records from Cornwall

---

*In spite of the current ease of accessibility, English probate records remain underused even by those who consult them. The obvious search—that is, one for wills or estates filed by individuals bearing the surname of interest or the surname of a known relative—frequently results in failure. Success commonly requires a more-comprehensive but carefully targeted study.*

By Ronald A. Hill, Ph.D.\*

**P**reconceived ideas thwart many research efforts. Combined with the intimidation most people feel upon approaching foreign records, the result can be a needless stalemate or failure. English probate records offer a prime example. Probate files are typically underused in the first place. Many researchers assume their ancestors would not have left wills or that “only the wealthy left estates to probate.” Even if a forebear is suspected of wealth, the challenge of locating, accessing, and understanding estate files of an unfamiliar jurisdiction can seem too problematic to be practical. Little wonder it is that English probate records are both a key genealogical source and a seriously neglected one.

Typically, American efforts to track the origins of English people focus upon the International Genealogical Index (IGI) of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City—a convenient finding aid for the baptism and marriage records created by Anglican parish priests. Good researchers always go beyond the IGI to the original registers that provided the IGI data. Yet even the parish records themselves are frequently inadequate. Baptismal entries often omit the names of infants’ mothers; and pre-1837 marriage registrations rarely note the parents of a bride or groom. Burial records have not yet been abstracted into the IGI; but even when the originals are consulted, they seldom yield the age of the deceased or cite any spouse or parent to aid in correct identification. In addition, the proliferation of common given names (John, William, Thomas, Elizabeth, Mary, etc.) can cause incredible confusion between families. It is not unusual to find two or three men of identical Christian and family names for whom children are baptized concurrently in the same or adjacent parishes.

---

\*7313 Gladden Avenue NE; Albuquerque, NM 87110. Dr. Hill, a recently retired physicist, has earned a practical education in English genealogical research through a quarter-century of relentless study at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City and at many record offices abroad. He is a past president of the New Mexico Genealogical Society and a frequent lecturer on English research at American genealogical conferences.

English probate records are of major value in sorting such families—a resource so accessible now that continued neglect is hard to justify. No longer must one struggle through various county record offices in England to determine whether a particular probate record exists. Extant files and ledgers are microfilmed and are centrally located at the Family History Library; that film also can be borrowed through one of more than two thousand branches of this library worldwide. In spite of the current ease of accessibility, English probate records remain underused even by those who consult them. The obvious search—that is, one for wills or estates filed by individuals bearing the surname of interest or the surname of a known relative—frequently results in failure.

Success commonly requires a more-comprehensive but carefully targeted study. The usual focus on individuals believed to have had some measure of wealth is highly unreliable. Some wealthy individuals left no will; perhaps they had settled their estates before death, or they were superstitious about writing that last will and testament. On the other hand, it is not unusual to find one for a husbandman whose individual bequests were less than a shilling and whose inventory scarcely totaled three pounds.

This article explores the potential that researchers can realize from a comprehensive probate study. It is based upon a two-part question:

Regardless of whether the probate index to a specific jurisdiction includes the ancestor or ancestral family in the parish of interest,

- can a researcher justify the time and cost expenditures of studying *all* probate records of that particular parish?
- can a researcher justify the time and cost expenditures of studying *all* probate records of *surrounding* parishes?

There is, of course, no guarantee that the statistics generated in this example will apply to the general case. But the material discussed here, as well as the approach that is outlined, is applicable to most regions of England.

#### THE SEARCH

The focus is a cluster of interrelated families in Cornwall, a county that forms England's southwestern promontory. (See figure 1.) The Pearce and Colwill families, who are emphasized in this paper, resided in the ancient deanery of Trigg Major, which encompassed thirty-two parishes in northern Cornwall.<sup>1</sup> Several families of secondary interest—Best, Bray, Cornish, Downing, Grigg, Joynt, Mark, Marshall, Parminter, and Scott—also appear there. A half-dozen others—Hill, Mathew, Mullis, Penkevill, Pinch, and Roscarrock—populate the adjacent deanery of Trigg Minor, composed of twenty parishes extending from the coast to Bodmin

---

1. The ancient deanery boundaries of the archdeaconry of Cornwall were abolished in 1875, when the original eight rural deaneries were restructured into twelve.

Moor. With an additional interest in the Achym family of Pelynt parish, about fourteen miles south of Trigg Major, the entire search extracted data on nineteen surnames from fifty-three parishes. An estimated 320 hours was spent on the project.

### *The records*

Research focused upon the extant holdings of two courts during the century 1600–1700, as follows:

#### ARCHDEACONRY COURT OF CORNWALL

The Family History Library offers fifty-two microfilmed rolls of Cornwall probate records from this court—the originals of which are at the Cornwall County Records Office in Truro. The files are organized alphabetically by surname and date. Those for the letter A, dating 1600 to 1700, are followed by those for the letter B, from 1600 to 1700. A handlist (a handwritten calendar) of the probates for each letter and year is included in the filming. For each case, the handlist cites a reference number; the testator's name (or the name of the deceased); the parish name; the probate date; and a notation as to whether the file contains a will, an administration, an inventory, or an account.

#### PREROGATIVE COURT OF CANTERBURY (PCC)

The materials of the PCC—the court of record for all England during the Commonwealth (1649–1660)—are variously approached. An index to the Cornish PCC probates, at the Cornwall County Record Office, provides each testator's name, parish, and PCC reference number. The Family History Library's microfilm collection covers PCC's registered probate records. Complete indexes to the probate records in the PCC can be found in that library's Locality Index, under the heading "England—Probate Records."

### *The procedure*

The handlist was read for any and all probates occurring in the two deaneries (fifty-three parishes) of interest. A table was compiled, noting cases by reference number, year, name of parish, and identity of the deceased. The actual cases were then examined, scanning each document line by line for several types of information on all surnames of interest, as outlined below:<sup>2</sup>

#### ACCOUNTS

(Probate accounts are written statements of receipts and disbursements sometimes made by the administrator.) Extracted data cover

- payments to debtors, legatees, or heirs.
- relationships noted between the deceased and the legatees or heirs, if any.

---

2. An excellent discussion of English probate records—one much broader than its title suggests—is provided by J. S. W. Gibson, *Wills and Where to Find Them* (Chichester, Sussex, Eng.: Phillimore, for the British Record Society, 1974).

## ADMINISTRATIONS

(Administrations are the acts by which someone is appointed to dispose of the real and personal property of one who has died intestate or whose will does not name executors. This type of record may include a petition for appointment, the act of appointment—"letters of administration"—and a bond by which the administrator and sureties guarantee that the terms of law will be observed.) Extracted data cover

- names of bondsmen, witnesses, and administrators.
- distinguishing signatures or marks.<sup>3</sup>

## DEPOSITIONS

(Depositions result when a will is challenged by one or more legatees or by relatives who contend that the submitted paper is not the proper testament of the deceased or that the testator did not act with free will and sound mind. Witnesses are called to testify as to their recollections of the proceedings surrounding the draft of the document presented for probate.) Extracted data cover

- all genealogical statements made in the depositions—including, often, the ages and the home parishes of deponents.
- distinguishing signatures or marks.

## INVENTORIES AND APPRAISEMENTS

(Inventories are detailed itemizations of personal and household goods left by the deceased; appraisements are inventories on which individual valuations are provided by qualified individuals. Frequently, one document serves both purposes. Inventories and appraisements were common in England during the century under study but became less so, and less detailed, in the eighteenth century.) Extracted data cover

- names of debtors or creditors; names and signatures of appraisers.
- other identifying information—as, for example, the occupation of the deceased, which often appears in the heading of an inventory; or the home parishes of the appraisers, which often are cited as part of the appraisers' identifications.

## PROBATE ACTS

(Probate acts are short descriptions—in Latin before 1733—of the action taken by the probate court in each case. In the archdeaconry of Cornwall, these acts are endorsed on the back of the will or administration bond, together with the name of the parish and the date of probate. Included in the act is the identity of the person or persons who executed the will or administered the estate.<sup>4</sup>) Extracted data cover

- names of all mentioned parties—and relationships, when given.
- date and location of the probate.

---

3. Individuals often are identifiable by their manner of signing. For example, if multiple men exist by the name of a witness and a burial record is found for one, the question arises: did this witness die or was the decedent another man? If a postburial signature for that name matches a preburial signature, then the question is resolved.

4. Probate acts may contain genealogical data that differ from or augment that found in wills and letters of administration. For example, the will of John Pooley of St. Teath, dated 2 January 1681/2, names his daughters *Katherine and Alice* as joint executrixes. However, the probate act, dated 31 January 1681/2, names the executrixes as *Katherine, wife of Nicholas Hodge, and Alice, wife of John Mullis, daughters of the deceased*. See probate record P1572, Archdeaconry Court of Cornwall, FHL microfilm 1471853.

## WILLS

(Wills are the instruments by which a person directs the disposition of his or her property after death. In the archdeaconry of Cornwall—as in most other locales—they were not filed with official papers until after the death of the testator. They might be holographic—written entirely by the individual in his own hand; or nuncupative—expressed orally on the deathbed and reduced to writing by witnesses but not signed by the deceased. Or they might have been dictated to a clerk, scrivener, or solicitor, after which the testator affixed his signature or mark.)  
Extracted data include

- names of relatives, tenants, friends, apprentices, debtors, creditors, overseers, witnesses, or other types of associates.
- signatures or marks of witnesses.

When a surname of interest was found, the will was completely abstracted.

*The results: Pearce of Trigg Major and Minor*

A number of apparently unrelated families bearing Pearce (and variant) surnames lived in northern Cornwall during the seventeenth century. The main family groups were in Trigg Major at Davidstow, Jacobstow, Launceston, North Petherwin, and Whitstone. (See figure 1.) Smaller groups were at Boyton, Egloskerry, North Tamerton, and Week Saint Mary. By the close of that century, Pearce baptisms can be found in all parishes of Trigg Major, except Morwenstow. Tables 1 through 3 summarize the data gleaned in this study. Users will note the following:

- Omitted are two of the thirty-four parishes of Trigg Major. Trewen and South Petherwin were in the jurisdiction of the bishop of Exeter, whose records were destroyed in the bombing of Exeter Cathedral during World War Two.
- Included are four parishes from Trigg Minor. Forrabury, Lesnewth, Minster, and Trevalga border Davidstow in Trigg Major. The Pearses of Davidstow appear to have had connections in these adjacent Trigg Minor parishes.

The results are striking. As shown in table 2, *Pearces created less than 2 percent of the probate cases but are found in three times that many files.* (Pearce probates:  $n=73$  or 1.6 percent; Pearce involvements in all cases:  $n=218$  or 4.9 percent.) In 14 of the 34 parishes, there were no Pearce probates at all; yet Pearses appear in 33 cases treating other surnames—an average of 2.4 appearances per parish.

Significant clues to relationships exist in many of the “other surname” cases. Pearses are named as legatees in over half the other cases ( $n=75$  of 124 or 60.5 percent). They were administrators (i.e., almost certainly relatives or in-laws) or bondsmen in a significant number of other cases ( $n=21$  or 26 percent). They were appraisers (likely neighbors or kinsmen ineligible to inherit) in a great majority of cases ( $n=105$  or 85 percent). In addition, 22 Pearses were connected closely enough to serve as overseers, receive payments from the estates, or make depositions in response to contested wills.

Two examples should suffice to demonstrate how the typical genealogical problem of identifying females can be resolved by this type of broad survey.

#### *Alice Pearse*

The parish registers of Jacobstow in Trigg Major offer a 1686 marriage entry for Digeory (Digory) Pearce with Alles (Alice) Pearse;<sup>5</sup> yet no female of that name appears in any extant baptismal register of Trigg Major. By cavassing all wills and probates of Trigg Major and the adjacent Trigg Minor parishes, a match was found. Alice is cited as a granddaughter in the 1682/3 will of John Pearse Sr. of Lanteglos by Camelford in Trigg Minor; and the baptism of Alice, daughter of John Pears and Margery, appears in that same parish. Also, John Pearse [Jr.] of Lanteglos by Camelford names Digory Pearce of Jacobstow as executor of his will, proved 1689.<sup>6</sup> If the identification of Alice had been the specific goal of this project, success would have required a search of all parishes within a ten-mile radius.

#### *Wilmot Pearce*

On 10 January 1671/2, in Egloshayle Parish of Trigg Minor, Humphry Pearce married Wilmot, widow of John Mullis. Wilmot's earlier marriage had occurred in that same place on 16 December 1656, at which time she was identified as Wilmot Anne. Her Mullis husband had died on 15 October 1657, also at Egloshayle; and on 8 June 1658 their first and only son (John Jr.) had been baptized in that parish.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to the present project, the area's resources had been combed for all Pearce, Mullis, and Anne records (as well as for variant spellings). The only clue found to Wilmot's identity was the following will for a resident of the adjacent parish of Saint Breock, found in the records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury:<sup>8</sup>

23 September 1655 (written)

18 January 1655/6 (proved)

Testator: *William Anny, yeoman*. Legatees: *wife Wilmott*, sister Joane; Nicholas Marshall Jr. and his daughter [unnamed]. Executor: father George Anny.

The details of the will suggest that Anny and his wife were relatively young and childless. The probate date suggests that this Wilmott might be same as the Wilmot Anne who married John Mullis eleven months after William's will was probated.

5. Jacobstow parish registers, Cornwall Co. Record Office DDP 92/1, 15 September 1686 (unpaginated, chronological arrangement), for Digeory Pearce and Alles Pearse; Family History Library [FHL] microfilm 1595809.

6. Probate record P1524, John Pearse Sr., Archdeaconry Court of Cornwall; FHL microfilm 1471853. Lanteglos by Camelford parish registers, Cornwall Co. Record Office, DDP 115/1, 24 May 1662 (chronological arrangement); no FHL microfilm. Probate record P1744, John Pearse, Archdeaconry Court of Cornwall; FHL microfilm 1471380.

7. Egloshayle parish registers, Cornwall Co. Record Office DDP 52/1 (chronological arrangement) for marriage of Humphry Pearce and Wilmot Mullis, burial of John Mullis, and baptism of John (son of John Mullis and Wilmot); FHL microfilm 1595486

8. Probate record PCC, [vol. labeled] Berkley, folio 7, William Anny; FHL microfilm 092216.

No marriage record was found for William and Wilmott, probably because records were not consistently maintained during the Commonwealth. Thus, no maiden name was provided for Wilmott Anny by the records one logically would examine.

The problem was solved by the deanery-wide probate search. Her maiden identity was established and it was confirmed that she was indeed the same person as Wilmut (Anne) (Mullis) Pearce. In the parish of Michaelstow, two parishes to the northeast of Egloshayle, the following will was probated:<sup>9</sup>

30 April 1681 (written)

08 June 1681 (proved)

Testator: *Richard Mountsteven*. Bequests to: kinsman Nicholas Marshall, kinswoman Anne Jeffery, *kinswoman Willmote Pearse and her son John Mullis*, kinswoman Elizabeth Marshall, kinswoman Honor Marshall—each female being *a sister of the aforesaid Nicholas Marshall*.

A reexamination of the parish registers in which English searches commonly begin provided the additional data needed to confirm the identity, as these extracts from baptismal entries at Saint Mabyn and Egloshayle in Trigg Minor reveal:<sup>10</sup>

16 April 1626	<i>Wilmott, daughter of Nicholaus Marshall and Margery</i>
20 June 1630	Elizabeth, daughter of Nicholas Marshall and Margery
10 December 1632	Nicholas, son of Nicholas Marshall
23 June 1636	Philipp, daughter of Nicholas Marshall
07 July 1639	Honor, daughter of Nicholas Marshall and Margery

#### *The results: Colwills of Trigg Major*

In contrast to the Pearces, the Colwills were relatively few in number and were concentrated in a single parish (Week Saint Mary) throughout the first three quarters of the studied century. (See figure 1.) One related couple dwelled at Tremaine, but they had no children. By the end of the seventeenth century, these families had begun to expand into surrounding parishes—Jacobstow, North Petherwin, Poundstock, and Whitstone. Thereafter, they would move into the remaining adjacent parishes of Boyton, Marhamchurch, North Tamerton, and Warbstow and then into the western parts of the adjacent county of Devon.

A search of surrounding parishes was quite productive for the Colwills of Week Saint Mary—as table 3 illustrates. In this example, *over four times as many probates mention the Colwill surname as there are Colwill estate cases*. (Note: The statistics in this example were computed from Week Saint Mary and adjacent parishes, but not for the entire deanery.) Several of the non-Colwill files helped unravel relationships that had otherwise proved difficult to decipher.

9. Probate record M1188, Archdeaconry Court of Cornwall; FHL microfilm 1471277.

10. St. Mabyn parish registers, Cornwall Co. Record Office, DDP 132/1 (chronological arrangement), for Wilmott, Elizabeth, and Honor; FHL microfilm 1595913. Egloshayle parish registers, Cornwall Co. Record Office DDP 52/1 (chronological arrangement), for Nicholas and Philipp; FHL microfilm 1595486.

### John Colwill

A typical case is that of several closely spaced marriages for the name John Colwill, which appear in the Week Saint Mary and Jacobstow parish registers.<sup>11</sup>

13 February 1678/9 John Colwill and Liddy Metherell  
 27 February 1678/9 John Colwill and Sarah Dagg  
 06 November 1679 John Collwell and An Tombe

The following will, drawn at Poundstock, provides clues to the latter John:<sup>12</sup>

1 November 1689 (written)  
 6 March 1689/90 (proved)  
 Testator: *Cornelius Tom, yeoman*. Legatees: mother Cicily Tom, *sister An Colwill and John her son*, sister Mary Stanton, brother Humphery Tom, sister Elizabeth Tom, the daughter of *Charles Colwill*. Executor: brother George Tom.

These details suggest that the John Collwell (Colwill) who married An Tom(be) had a relative named Charles Colwill and that John was now dead. According to parish registers of Week Saint Mary, only one of the John Colwills baptized there had a brother Charles. Further, the Cornelius Tom will leaves his sister An four times the sum left to his other siblings, suggesting a greater need on her part. His inventory lists the husband of Mary Tom, but not the husband of An. Presumably, John Colwill, the husband of An, was dead. Poundstock's burial records are lost for the period, but its baptismal records report one child for this couple.<sup>13</sup>

17 February 1680/1 John, son of John Colwell and An

In short, a reading of all probate records in the deanery resolved an identity problem that could not be resolved by Colwill probates themselves.

### The Overall Results for Trigg Major

This project suggests that researchers who seek wills for only the surname of interest will miss over two-thirds of the available probate data—as illustrated by table 1. Its summary covers all surnames for which the search was conducted completely throughout the deanery. As the bottom line shows: 266 wills were found for 12 surnames of interest; but over twice that number (560) of other-surname wills contained information on members of the 12 studied families.

### CONCLUSION

Two patterns have emerged that lend hope to many genealogists and biographers discouraged by prior research. First, for every probate case existing for a

11. *Week St. Mary parish registers, Cornwall Co. Record Office DDP 248/1 (chronological)*, for the two February marriages; FHL microfilm 1596316. *Jacobstow parish registers, Cornwall Co. Record Office DDP 92/1*, for the November marriage; FHL microfilm 1595809.

12. Probate record T1425, Archdeaconry Court of Cornwall; FHL microfilm 1471721.

13. *Poundstock parish registers, Cornwall Co. Record Office DDP 193/1 (chronological arrangement)*; FHL microfilm 1596143.



surname in this study, there are *on average* two to three relevant other-name probates in the same or adjoining parishes. Second, even if no probates are found for a given surname in a parish but families of that name live in the parish or an adjoining one, there are *on average* two to three other-name probates that mention the family of interest. Clearly, a comprehensive search—time-consuming though it can be—is a worthwhile strategy. In the best of cases, it can resolve specific problems of relationship or identity. In other cases, it will enable the researcher to set aside uncertainties, close out research in that particular area, and move on with confidence to other areas that offer potential.

**Table 1**  
Ratio of Appearances  
Family Probates Compared to Appearances in Other-Surname Probates  
Deanery of Trigg Major, 1600–1700  
Northern Cornwall, England

FAMILY SURNAME OF INTEREST	NUMBER OF FAMILY CASES	NUMBER OF OTHER-SURNAME CASES MENTIONING FAMILY OF INTEREST	RATIO
PRIMARY INTEREST			
Colwill	9	42	4.7
Pearce	73	218	3.0
SECONDARY INTEREST			
Best	3	10	3.3
Bray	51	87	1.7
Cornish	7	4	0.6
Downing	12	34	2.8
Grigg	33	40	1.2
Joynt	1	8	8.0
Mark	14	29	2.1
Marshall	59	81	1.4
Parminter	0	3	—
Scott	4	4	1.0
TOTALS	266	560	2.1

**Conclusion:**

*A probate search that is limited to the family surname of interest can miss two-thirds of the relevant probate records that exist.*

**Table 2**  
Pearce Probates Compared to Pearce Appearances in Other-Surname Probate Files  
Northern Cornwall, England, 1600–1700

PARISH	TOTAL CASES	PEARCE CASES	OTHER CASES	NUMBER AND TYPE OF OTHER PEARCE APPEARANCES
<u>TRIGG MAJOR</u>				
Altarnun	181	1 ad	1 ac 5 wi	2 paid 1 depo, 1 exec, 2 heir, 4 witn
Boyton	117	1 ad 1 wi	2 in 3 wi	2 appr 2 appr, 6 heir, 3 witn
Davidstow	95	1 ac 3 ad 3 pc 12 wi	9 in 6 wi	10 appr 3 appr, 3 over, 6 witn
Egloskerry	120	3 wi	3 wi	1 appr, 3 heir, 1 witn
Jacobstow	151	1 ad 1 in 4 wi	2 ad 12 in 9 wi	1 appr, 2 bond 12 appr 1 appr, 1 exec, 6 heir, 1 over, 5 witn
Kilkhampston	223	—	—	
Laneast	81	—	1 wi	2 appr, 2 witn
Launcells	196	1 ac 2 ad 1 wi	2 wi	1 debt, 2 witn
Launceston	324	1 pc 7 wi	3 ad 8 in 17 wi	3 bond 8 appr 5 appr, 6 heir, 2 ment, 2 over, 9 witn
Marhamchurch	133	—	1 ac 2 ad 1 in 2 wi	1 paid 1 appr, 2 bond 1 appr 1 appr, 1 heir, 1 witn
Morwenstow	198	—	1 wi	1 heir
North Petherwin	277	1 ac 2 ad 4 wi	2 ad 3 in 7 wi	1 admr, 1 appr, 1 bond 3 appr 2 appr, 1 bond, 3 heir, 1 ment, 3 witn
North Tamerton	121	1 ad 1 wi	1 ad 8 wi	1 bond 9 heir, 1 over, 3 witn

*ac*=account; *ad*=administration; *in*=inventory; *pc*=Prerogative Court of Canterbury; *wi*=will

*adm*r=administrator; *appr*=appraiser; *bond*=bondsman; *debt*=debtor; *depo*=deposer; *exec*=executor; *heir*=heir or legatee  
*ment*=mention; *over*=overseer; *renu*=renunciator; *witn*=witness

**Table 2 (continued)**  
 Pearce Probates Compared to Pearce Appearances in Other-Surname Probate Files  
 Northern Cornwall, England, 1600–1700

PARISH	TOTAL CASES	PEARCE CASES	OTHER CASES	NUMBER AND TYPE OF OTHER PEARCE APPEARANCES
<u>TRIGG MAJOR</u>				
Otterham	46	—	1 ad 2 wi	1 witn 2 witn
Poughill	124	—	1 ad	1 admr
Poundstock	178	1 ad	3 wi	1 appr, 1 heir, 1 over, 1 witn
Saint Clether	25	2 pc 1 wi	1 wi	1 appr, 2 heir
Saint Gennys	175	—	—	
Saint Giles in the Heath	77	—	3 ad 1 in 3 wi	3 bond 1 appr 1 admr, 1 appr, 9 heir
Saint Juliot	70	—	1 in	1 appr
Saint Stephens by Launceston	214	2 wi	1 ad 3 in 7 wi	1 bond 2 appr, 1 ment 2 appr, 1 depo, 2 heir, 1 ment, 5 witn
Saint Thomas by Launceston	104	1 pc	1 ad 2 in 3 wi	1 admr, 1 renu 2 appr 1 appr, 2 heir, 2 witn
South Petherwin	*	*	*	
Stratton	364	1 ad	2 ad 6 wi	2 bond 6 heir, 2 paid, 3 witn
Tremaine	42	1 wi	1 wi	1 debt
Treneglos	65	—	1 in 1 wi	1 appr 1 witn
Tresmeer	43	—	1 ad 1 wi	1 bond 1 appr, 2 witn
Trewen	*	*	*	
Warbstow	129	1 ad 1 wi	2 in 3 wi	2 appr 1 appr, 3 ment, 1 over, 2 witn

\* South Petherwin and Trewen were in the probate jurisdiction of the bishop of Exeter, whose records were destroyed by bombing in 1942.

**Table 2 (continued)**  
 Pearce Probates Compared to Pearce Appearances in Other-Surname Probate Files  
 Northern Cornwall, England, 1600–1700

PARISH	TOTAL CASES	PEARCE CASES	OTHER CASES	NUMBER AND TYPE OF OTHER PEARCE APPEARANCES
<u>TRIGG MAJOR</u>				
Week Saint Mary	165	2 wi	5 in 5 wi	5 appr 2 appr, 5 witn
Werrington	110	3 wi	1 ac 1 ad 4 in 3 wi	1 paid 1 bond 4 appr 1 bond, 3 witn
Whitstone	90	1 ad 1 pc 2 wi	2 ad 4 in 14 wi	1 appr, 2 bond 4 appr 7 appr, 2 depo, 9 heir, 1 ment, 1 over, 11 witn
<u>TRIGG MINOR</u>				
Forrabury	36	—	2 in 1 wi	2 appr 1 over
Lesnewth	39	—	1 wi	6 heir
Minster	91	—	1 ad 3 in 1 wi	1 bond 3 appr 1 heir
Trevalga	56	1 ad	1 ac 3 in 4 wi	1 paid 3 appr 1 appr, 4 witn
TOTALS	4460	3 ac 16 ad 1 in 8 pc 45 wi	4 ac 24 ad 66 in 124 wi	5 paid 3 admr, 4 appr, 20 bond, 1 renu 66 appr, 1 ment 1 admr, 35 appr, 2 bond, 2 debt, 4 depo, 2 exec, 75 heir, 8 ment, 11 over, 2 paid, 80 witn
GRAND TOTALS	4460	73 1.64%	218 4.86%	4 admr, 105 appr, 22 bond, 2 debt, 4 depo, 2 exec, 75 heir, 9 ment, 11 over, 7 paid, 1 renu, 80 witn

**Table 3**  
Colwill Probates Compared to Colwill Appearances in Other-Surname Probate Files  
Northern Cornwall, England, 1600–1700

PARISH	TOTAL CASES	COLWILL CASES	OTHER CASES	NUMBER AND TYPE OF OTHER COLWILL APPEARANCES
<u>TRIGG MAJOR</u>				
Boyton	117	—	—	
Jacobstow	151	—	1 wi	2 heir
Marhamchurch	133	—	—	
North Petherwin	277	—	1 ad 1 in 4 wi	1 appr, 1 bond 1 appr 1 heir, 2 over, 1 paid, 2 witn
North Tamerton	121	—	—	
Poundstock	178	—	3 wi	1 appr, 4 heir
Tremaine	42	1 wi	—	
Treneglos	65	—	2 wi	1 appr, 5 heir, 1 witn
Tresmeer	43	—	1 inv	1 appr
Warbstow	129	—	—	
Week Saint Mary	165	1 ac 1 ad 6 wi	1 ac 11 in 13 wi	1 paid 12 appr 4 appr, 5 heir, 1 over, 9 witn
Whitstone	90	—	3 in 1 wi	3 appr 1 witn
TOTALS	1511	1 ac 1 ad 7 wi	1 ac 1 ad 16 in 24 wi	1 paid 1 appr, 1 bond 17 appr 6 appr, 17 heir, 3 over, 13 witn
GRAND TOTALS	1511	9 0.59%	42 2.77%	24 appr, 1 bond, 17 heir, 3 over, 1 paid 13 witn

ac=account; ad=administration; in=inventory; pc=Prerogative Court of Canterbury; wi=will

adm=administrator; appr=appraiser; bond=bondsman; heir=heir or legatee; over=overseer; witn=witness

**Figure 1**  
Northern Cornwall, England  
Trigg Major and Adjacent Parishes in Trigg Minor



The dark line encloses the thirty-two parishes of the ancient deanery of Trigg Major. To the southwest are the adjoining parishes in the deanery of Trigg Minor. (St. Breock, at the extreme southwest, actually fell into Trigg Minor's adjacent deanery of Pydar.)