

Frederick Philipse III



I would like to find out more about the family and descendants of Frederick Philipse III because of my research on one of his grandsons, James Phillips Webber. James' mother was Charlotte Margaret Philipse/Phillips, a daughter of Frederick.

On the following page is an attempt at a family group record for Frederick Philipse III. Beginning on page 3 is a reprint of chapter 1 of my book 'James Phillips Webber – the man and the mystery' (CB Alexander Foundation, Paterson NSW Australia, 2008). The chapter talks about James Webber's ancestors, including Frederick Philipse.

For details about James Phillips Webber refer to my website www.patersonriver.com.au and www.tocal.com

Details on the children of Frederick Philipse are difficult to confirm from primary sources, and secondary sources provide conflicting information. If you can help please email me at the following address:

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Family group record for Frederick Philipse III

Husband:	Frederick PHILIPSE		
Born	12 Sept 1720	in	
Baptised	14 Sept 1720	in	Reformed Dutch Church of New Amsterdam
Died	30 April 1786	in	Chester, England
Buried		in	Chester Cathedral
Father	Frederick PHILIPSE		
Mother	Johannah BROCKHOLST		
Wife	Elizabeth WILLIAMS		
Married	9 Sept 1756		
Born	abt 1732	in	
Died	1817	in	Bath, England
Father	Charles WILLIAMS		
Child 1	Maria Eliza PHILLIPS		
Born	abt 1759		
Died	5 Apr 1838		Clifton, Gloucestershire, England
Buried		in	Clifton Church
Spouse	Lionel SMYTHE Viscount STRANGFORD b. 19 May 1753 d. 1 Oct 1801		
Married	4 Sep 1779	in	New York City
Child 2	Frederick PHILLIPS		
Born	1760		
Died	abt 1806		
Spouse	Henrietta Maria (Harriet) GRIFFITHS		
Married	14 Apr 1792	in	Mold, Wales
Child 3	Philip PHILLIPS		
Died	Mar 1829	in	Wales (Horsley Hall?) unmarried
Child 4	Charles PHILLIPS		
Died	1846 at Linwood, Hampshire (Lieut Gen, Sir?) or drowned Bay of Fundy?		
Child 5	Sarah (Louisa?) PHILLIPS		
Spouse	Mungo NOBLE		
Married	8 Feb 1783		
Child 6	John PHILLIPS		
Born	abt 1766		(Capt RN)
Died	18 Mar 1813	in	Bristol, England (not 1805 at Trafalgar)
Child 7	Charlotte Margaret PHILLIPS		
Born	abt 1772	in	Yonkers, New York
Died	7 Nov 1840	in	Oswestry, Shropshire, England
Buried	12 Nov 1840	in	St Oswald's, Chester (grounds of Chester Cath.)
Spouse	Edward WEBBER b. abt 1761 d. 17 Mar 1845, buried St Oswald's		
Married	9 May 1789	in	St James, Westminster, Middlesex, England
Child 8	Elizabeth PHILLIPS		
Died	8 Mar 1828	in	Bath, England
Child 9	Susan PHILLIPS (may be earlier in the list), died young		
Child 10	Catherine PHILLIPS (may be earlier in the list), died young		

Chapter 1:

THE YOUNG GENTLEMAN

Most people who drive along the road between Gresford and Lostock Dam would not give a second thought when they pass a mailbox that carries the name ‘Penshurst’. Yet the occurrence of this name on the Paterson River in New South Wales provides a fascinating link to the American, British and European family history of James Phillips Webber who, as a young gentleman in 1822, was granted the land known as ‘Tocal’.



James’ brother, John Phillips Webber, was granted land on the upper Paterson River shortly after his arrival in New South Wales in 1826¹ and proudly named it ‘Penshurst’ in honour of their first cousin, Percy Smythe, who had recently been given an English peerage by King George IV as a reward for extraordinary diplomatic services. Percy Smythe was the sixth Lord Strangford, having inherited this Irish peerage upon the death of his father in 1801. Then in 1825, as a result of the King’s gratitude, Strangford became the first Baron of Penshurst.²

Lord Strangford joined the diplomatic service in 1803 as a junior member of the English Legation to Lisbon in Portugal, and within a few years became Head of Legation. This was during the Napoleonic wars, and Strangford had the delicate task of convincing the Regent of Portugal, Prince John, to remove his court to Brazil (then a Portuguese colony) as the French army advanced on Lisbon. Britain sent a naval expedition to rescue Prince John, but initially he decided to stay and align his country with France.

At the last moment, with the French army only a day’s march from Lisbon, Lord Strangford went ashore under a flag of truce and convinced the Regent to ‘direct all his fears to a French army, and all his hopes to an English fleet’.³ When the French army entered Lisbon in December 1807, the Prince and Lord Strangford were together on the high seas with the Portuguese Court and the country’s archives, en route for Rio de Janeiro where Prince John re-established his court in exile.

In 1817 Lord Strangford was promoted to the post of Minister to the Court of Stockholm, with the special task of smoothing difficulties between Sweden and Denmark. He was most successful in his efforts, and was rewarded by the English Prince Regent with the posting of Ambassador to Constantinople (now Istanbul) as a royal favour for restoring tranquillity to the north of Europe.

Strangford reached the peak of his career while in Constantinople. After intense diplomatic efforts, including several private interviews in 1822 with Emperor Alexander of Russia, Strangford managed to avert a war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. In 1824 the Russian Emperor formally requested the King of England to reward Strangford for his diplomatic services. This is how James Webber's first cousin gained an English peerage and why a rustic roadside mailbox on the Paterson River carries the name 'Penshurst'.

In 1824 the King of Sardinia also expressed his gratitude to the King of England for Lord Strangford's services and asked that Strangford be rewarded. In the final chapter of this book, when we are struggling to understand why James Webber settled in Sardinia in the later part of his life, we can recall the Strangford-Sardinian connection and wonder if it was not a coincidence.

As first cousins, James Webber and Lord Strangford shared grandparents, and this convergence gives us the opportunity to explore another fascinating aspect of James' family history and further connections to world events. Their grandfather-in-common was Colonel Frederick Philipse (the Third) of Yonkers, New York (one of Frederick's daughters was James' mother and another was Strangford's mother).

The Philipse story began when a Dutch carpenter named Vrederic Felypsen arrived in New Amsterdam in 1653 and accumulated a massive fortune from shipping and trading in fur and slaves. His fortune was bolstered by marrying a wealthy Dutch 'she-merchant', Margaret Hardenbroeck, in 1662, who owned five ships in her own right at the time.⁴ The pair continued to thrive after the English took over the colony and renamed it New York. Vrederic anglicised his name to Frederick Philipse, was appointed an alderman of New York City in 1674, and in 1675 became a member of the governor's Council of advisors, the highest honour a colonial could attain.⁵

With a masterful mix of business and politics, Philipse acquired extensive land holdings of around 300,000 acres on both sides of the Hudson River in New York Province. In 1693, by British Royal decree, his 90,000 acres in Westchester County became the 'Mannour of Philipsborough' and established Frederick as Lord of the Manor, with certain quasi-feudal rights and privileges. The Philipse Manor extended for nearly 40 kilometres along the east bank of the Hudson River and would later include the northern outskirts of New York City (today's city of Yonkers).

After the death of his elder son, Frederick's grandson Frederick Philipse II became Lord of the Manor in 1716. Upon the death of Frederick I's younger son, Frederick II inherited the whole Philipse estate (the manor and other vast areas of land).

Frederick Philipse II received a legal education in England, and was subsequently appointed as justice of the Court of the Exchequer in New York and then as Second

Judge of the New York Supreme Court. His eldest son, Frederick III, became Lord of the Manor in 1751 at the age of 30, inheriting not just the Manor but also those slaves who were not sold after his father's death.⁶ He would posthumously become James Phillips Webber's grandfather in 1797.

Frederick Philipse III took up residence in the family's summer retreat, the 'Manor Hall' in Yonkers, New York, which was located in the southern part of Philipse Manor. The Manor Hall survives today as part of New York's heritage, and is open to the public as a tourist attraction. Frederick III married Elizabeth Williams on 9 September 1756,⁷ and in the Manor Hall at Yonkers they brought up their large family of eight children.⁸

Frederick Philipse III, like his forebears, was a man of enormous wealth. He entertained frequently for New York's colonial elite, and his Manor Hall was attended by a large number of slaves and other servants. Unlike his ancestors, however, this rotund and rather lethargic lord of the manor was far less interested in politics and civic affairs, preferring instead to pursue his passion for the arts and agriculture (passions that his grandson, James Webber, would share nearly a century later).



PHILIPSE MANOR HALL AT YONKERS, NEW YORK, IN THE 21ST CENTURY. PHOTO: JENNIFER LAFFAN.

As tensions built in the years leading up to the American Revolution, there was no doubt where the loyalties of Frederick Philipse III lay.⁹ His family fortune was founded on the British colonial system and he had moulded his life style after the English gentry. Almost inevitably he became known as a 'loyalist', one the New York 'Tories' who opposed independence from Great Britain.

Once the American Revolution began in earnest, Frederick was arrested at Philipse Manor on 9 August 1776 on the orders of George Washington. Several days later Frederick was removed to Connecticut where he was interrogated and placed in exile along with several other loyalists. At about the same time he was branded as a traitor by a Convention of Representatives of the State of New York. James Webber's mother, Charlotte Philipse, was about four years old when her father was taken away.

Philipse's imprisonment was short-lived—he was released on parole at the end of August but confined to the local district. After five months in captivity he was allowed to return home on 23 December 1776 on the condition he did not antagonise any of the 'United States of America' and did not pass intelligence to their enemies.

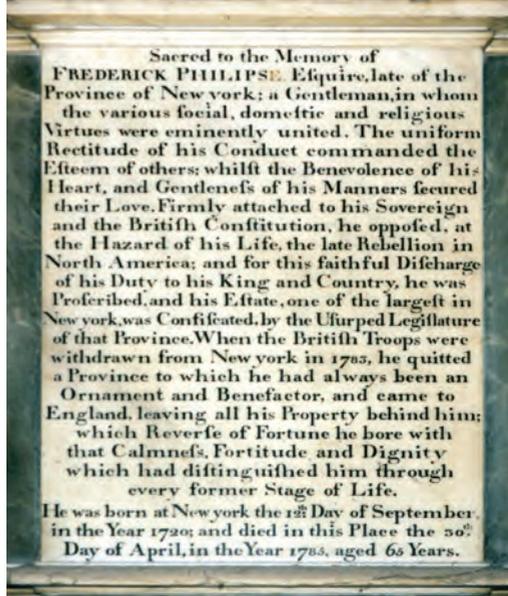
Meanwhile, Philipse Manor was in the heart of the war zone and was occupied at different times by components of both armies. During Frederick's exile, Elizabeth and the children continued to live at the Manor Hall with her sister-in-law and of course the servants. Adapting to the circumstances, they extended their hospitality to both the American and British officers in the vicinity, at different times offering hot chocolate to the Americans and tea to the British.¹⁰

In 1777, within just a few months of his return, Frederick Philipse committed an act of selfless loyalty or egregious stupidity. He spotted a column of American troops moving past the Manor Hall and learnt they were on their way to attack a British post. Philipse sent a note to warn the British troops of the impending attack, but his courier was captured and his letter fell into American hands. Philipse panicked, loaded his family onto a boat on the river and fled to the British in New York. He would never see his Manor Hall again. Charlotte Philipse was about five years old when bundled onto the boat with her family. She certainly had a dramatic tale to later relate to her son, James Webber.

Under the Confiscation Act of October 1779, the revolutionary leadership of New York deprived Frederick Philipse and 58 other loyalists or British officials of all their land and condemned each of them to death if ever caught within the boundaries of New York State. 'This single stroke had banished forever the pro-British governing elite of colonial days and made some of the choicest land in North America the property of New York State and available to its people'.¹¹

Frederick Philipse and his family left New York in 1783 as the British troops withdrew, and fled to England. Frederick died in 1786 and is interred in Chester Cathedral where a large plaque marks his passing.¹² His family was not reduced to poverty, however, by the loss of the Manor and their flight to England. They received the huge sum of £53,000 in compensation from the British government for loss of the Manor due to unwavering loyalty to Britain. (The amount equates to over 12 million Australian dollars in equivalent purchasing power in 2007).¹³

MEMORIAL PLAQUE TO FREDERICK PHILIPSE IN
CHESTER CATHEDRAL, ENGLAND. PHOTO: CAMERON
ARCHER



In London on 9 May 1789 at St James, Westminster, at the tender age of seventeen, Charlotte Phillips (as she was now called) married a British army captain named Edward Webber.¹⁴ Edward had been born in Ireland about 1761, but his family origins are somewhat obscure.¹⁵ The best clue to Edward's roots comes from the knowledge that one of James Webber's cousins was a 'Commissioner to Ireland'.¹⁶ This was probably Daniel Webber, a Dublin-based lawyer who was a Commissioner of Inquiry into Law Courts in Ireland in 1822 and a Commissioner of Inquiry into the Collection of Revenue in Ireland between 1821 and 1826.

If Daniel Webber is the correct cousin, which is very likely, then James Webber's father hailed from a wealthy Anglo-Irish family whose origins can be traced to County Cork in the 1600s and 1700s, then to Glanbane in County Limerick where Daniel Webber's father was born (and possibly to Leckfield in County Sligo where Daniel Webber was born).¹⁷

Several Webbers were prominent in the history of Cork—Edward and Michael Webber were among the officers who landed in Ireland in 1649 as part of Cromwell's army, and Edward was later granted land in Cork that had been confiscated from Irish owners.¹⁸ This may have been the start of the Webbers in Cork, who subsequently acquired prominence and wealth as merchants, landowners and officials.

An Edward Webber was Sheriff of the City of Cork in 1675 and Mayor in 1684. An Edward Webber was Town Clerk of the City of Cork in 1720 and a member of the Parliament of Ireland from 1727 until his death in 1731. Unfortunately, the link between these Edward Webbers and James Webber's forebears is not completely proven but highly likely, given the known lineage of James Webber's cousin.

Regardless of its source, family wealth enabled James Webber's father, Edward, to pursue a superficially impressive but somewhat leisurely career in the British army. He purchased his initial commission and subsequent promotions until attaining the lofty rank of Lieutenant-General in 1830. His rank obscured the fact that two months before his marriage in 1789, at the rank of captain, he had permanently withdrawn from active service onto 'Half-Pay', effectively a form of retirement—he could be recalled to active service but there is no indication that this occurred.¹⁹

The details of Charlotte and Edward's life after their marriage in Westminster are sketchy and marked by several changes of location. At one stage they resided at

Caynton House in Shropshire. At the time of the birth of their first child, James Phillips Webber, they lived in north Wales, in the vicinity of the village of Overton in Flintshire.²⁰ James was born there on 17 July 1797 as were his two brothers—John Phillips Webber in 1800 and Edward Affleck Webber in 1802.²¹

James' parents were living at Horsley Hall near Wrexham in north Wales in 1832 and then at Bellevue House in Oswestry, Shropshire, from the mid 1830s until 1841.²² Charlotte died at Bellevue House in 1840 and later Edward lived with his youngest son, Edward, at Erbistock which is near Overton. Edward senior died at Erbistock Lodge in 1845 and was buried with Charlotte in the grounds of Chester Cathedral. Evidently Charlotte wished to be buried near her father, Frederick Philipse.²³

It is frustrating that we have no direct knowledge of the childhood and education of James and his brothers. It is clear that James was well educated and highly literate. Judging by the library he brought to New South Wales, he was familiar with, if not fluent in, several languages including French and Italian.²⁴ This fact, combined with his activities later in life, suggests the family may have travelled extensively in Europe during his childhood and adolescence, and he may have been educated outside Britain for some time. Remember also that his first cousin, Lord Strangford, was a high-ranking diplomat in various parts of Europe during this period.



THE GRAVE OF EDWARD WEBBER JR. THE INSCRIPTION READS "EDWARD AFFLECK WEBBER OF ERBISTOCK LODGE. DIED SEPTEMBER 12TH 1884 AGED 82 YEARS." PHOTO: JENNIFER LAFFAN

How ever he spent his childhood, on 31 May 1821 James Phillips Webber wrote to Earl Bathurst at the Colonial Office to announce his intention to emigrate to New South Wales and to request a grant of land.²⁵

This well educated and class-privileged young gentleman was able to draw on his inherited wealth, a wealth based on the business acumen and political astuteness of his slave-trading, Dutch New York ancestors and his Anglo-Irish forebears. Thus at the age of 23, James Phillips Webber could declare to Lord Bathurst that he had £3,000 in cash and credit at his disposal to develop a land grant in New South Wales. This equates to almost \$500,000 (Australian) in equivalent purchasing power in 2007.²⁶

Bathurst granted Webber's request for land within 24 hours of receiving it!²⁷

FAMILY RECORD FOR JAMES PHILLIPS WEBBER

Father: **Edward WEBBER**

Born: about 1761 in: Ireland
 Died: 17 Mar 1845 in: Erbistock, Flintshire, Wales
 Buried: 25 Mar 1845 in: St Oswald's, Chester

Mother: **Charlotte Margaret PHILLIPS**

Married: 9 May 1789 in: St James, Westminster, Middlesex, England
 Born: about 1772 in: Yonkers, New York
 Died: 7 Nov 1840 in: Oswestry, Shropshire, England
 Buried: 12 Nov 1840 in: St Oswald's, Chester

Child 1 **James Phillips WEBBER**

Born: 17 Jul 1797 in: Overton, Flintshire, Wales
 Died: 25 Nov 1877 in: Pisa, Italy

Child 2 John Phillips WEBBER

Born: 16 May 1800 in: Overton, Flintshire, Wales
 Died: 18 Feb 1845 in: Camden Town, London

Child 3 Edward (Montgomery) Affleck WEBBER

Born: 21 Dec 1802 in: Overton, Flintshire, Wales
 Died: 12 Sep 1884 in: Erbistock, Flintshire, Wales
 Buried: in: St Hilary's, Erbistock, Wales

ENDNOTES

- 1 *Sydney Gazette*, 22 November 1826; CS, Register of Land Grants and Leases, Counties of Durham and Brisbane 1823-1837, 7/456 [reel 2548], SRNSW.
- 2 Edward Barrington de Fonblanque, *Lives of the Lords Strangford* (London, 1877), 107-163.
- 3 de Fonblanque, *Lives of the Lords Strangford*, 116.
- 4 Jean Zimmerman, *The Women of the House, How a Colonial She-Merchant Built a Mansion, a Fortune, and a Dynasty* (Orlando, 2006), 85-87.
- 5 Stefan Bielinski, *An American Loyalist: The Ordeal of Frederick Philipse III* (New York, 1976). While Vrederic Felypsen was born in Holland, it is claimed that his ancestors were Bohemian: Thomas Capek, *Ancestry of Frederick Philipse, First Lord and Founder of Philipse Manor at Yonkers, N.Y.* (1939).
- 6 *New York Post-Boy*, 29 July 1751, as compiled by Kenneth Scott, *Genealogical Data from The New York Post-Boy 1743-1773* (Washington, 1980); Margaret Vetare, *Philipsburg Manor Upper Mills* (New York, 2004), 55.
- 7 *New York Mercury*, 13 September 1756, as compiled by Kenneth Scott, *Genealogical Data from Colonial New York Newspapers* (Baltimore, 1977).
- 8 Precise family details are elusive. There appears to have been ten children including two who died young. One source indicates that Elizabeth Philipse bore eleven children, of whom nine survived to adulthood: Zimmerman, *The Women of the House*, 320. The lack of detail probably stems from destruction of records in a fire in St John's Episcopal Church at Yonkers in 1791. St John's was built by Frederick Philipse III in 1752/53 according to *The New York Times*, 7 June 1894.

- 9 Differing views on the extent of Frederick Philipse's loyalism have been analysed by Bielinski who concludes convincingly that Frederick's loyalism never wavered: Bielinski, *An American Loyalist*, 15-19.
- 10 Zimmerman, *The Women of the House*, 326.
- 11 Bielinski, *An American Loyalist*, 30.
- 12 The tablet in Chester Cathedral indicates he died in 1785 but the parish register indicates 1786: Bielinski, *An American Loyalist*, 32.
- 13 Jacob Judd, "Frederick Philipse III of Westchester County: A Reluctant Loyalist", in *The Loyalist Americans: A Focus on Greater New York*, ed. Robert East and Jacob Rudd (Tarrytown, New York, 1975), 25-43; For equivalent purchasing power see www.measuringworth.com.
- 14 Marriage Certificate, a copy of which is filed in PA3462, SRNSW.
- 15 The 1841 Census of Shropshire indicates he was born in Ireland, and the age on his death certificate indicates he was born about 1761.
- 16 Nowlan family papers, RB/Coll Q994.02 NOWL-1, Newcastle University Archives.
- 17 Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1863), 1630.
- 18 Edward Webber also purchased land that had been confiscated: John O'Hart, *The Irish and Anglo-Irish Landed Gentry: When Cromwell Came to Ireland* (Dublin, 1884; Baltimore, 2000), 410, 517, 521.
- 19 British Army Lists and Half Pay Registers, PRO London; *The Gentlemans Magazine*, May 1845, 565.
- 20 Overton is now in Denbighshire.
- 21 Birth certificates, copies of which are filed in PA3462, SRNSW; *Overton Parish Registers—Baptisms & Burials 1783-1812*, (Clwyd Family History Society, 1994), 16-22.
- 22 Webber to Colonial Office, 23 February 1832, CO 201/230, PRO London; 1841 Census of Shropshire.
- 23 Death certificates; Burial records for St Oswald's, Chester.
- 24 Catalogue of the Remaining Part of the Library of James P Webber Esq., ML 018.2W, ML; *Sydney Herald*, 27 April 1835.
- 25 Webber to Bathurst, 31 May 1821, CO201/108, PRO London.
- 26 See www.measuringworth.com.
- 27 HRA 1, X, 374-375 (Bathurst to Webber, 1 June 1821).