

Generation 1

Pierre Ortiger

Pierre Ortiger was born about 1802 in France to Paul Antione Ortiger, a carpenter, and his first wife, Marguerite Picard, of Tonnay Charente, a tidal port town located 25 miles inland from La Rochelle France. Pierre was the youngest of three children and the only son. His sisters, Marie and Ursule Ortiger had died as children in 1801 and 1803 respectively. It has been suggested that the Ortiger family may have moved from France to County Durham as a consequence of the civil unrest resulting from the French Revolution (1890s) and thereafter the Napoleonic Wars.¹



Pierre married three times. His first wife, whom he married in Sunderland in November 1833, was Margaret Whitfield by whom he had at least one surviving child (and who was possibly their only child), Joseph Ortiger, whose birth was registered at Sunderland, Durham for the Jul-Sep quarter of 1837. It is interesting to note that their marriage was solemnised twice – at both St Mary's Roman Catholic Church and St Michael's and All Angels. It is suggested that the second service was necessary as Catholic marriages were not officially recognised.³

The Whitfields were a long-standing Northumberland family. Margaret had been born on 17th September 1808 and baptised on 9th October at Saint Andrew's Catholic Church in Newcastle, and possibly by the founder priest of the newly rebuilt church, Father James Worswick who came from an old Lancastrian Catholic family and who had trained at Douai until the French Revolution. Her parents were Robert and Eleanor Whitfield (née Brown who may have been born in Northallerton, Yorkshire) and at the time of Margaret's birth her family was living in Wallsend. At least one other child was born to Robert and Eleanor – Margaret's elder sister Helen born in 1805 and baptised, also at Saint Andrew's on 3rd February 1806.⁴

Pierre Ortiger was not at home for the 1841 census. In fact, being a mariner meant that he would have spent a considerable amount of time at sea. His wife Margaret and son Joseph were living at East Street, Bishop Wearmouth, Durham. We do not know very much about Margaret, but it is interesting to note that for the 1841 the Ortiger household included a Robert Whitfield. Whereas Joseph Ortiger was listed as having been born in Durham, Margaret and Robert Whitfield were not.⁵

Margaret Ortiger	30		
Joseph Ortiger	4		
Robert Whitfield	29	Cabinet Maker	

Pierre Ortiger was absent again ten years later for the 1851 census, when Margaret and Joseph, still at Bishop Wearmouth, were living at 36 Sans(?) Street.⁶

Margaret Ortiger	Wife	M	42	Mariner's Wife	Newcastle, Northumberland
Joseph Ortiger	Son		13	Scholar	Bishopwearmouth, Durham.

The 1861 census finds Pierre and Margaret (with the surname spelt Ortizer) living at 112 High Street, Sunderland. Now almost 60 years old, Pierre has now got a shore job.⁷

Peter Ortiger	Head	M	59	Clerk Shipbroker	Charente, France
Margaret Ortiger	Wife	M	53		Northumberland

Shortly after this census, on 26th September Margaret died at home at 112 High Street, and her death was registered at Sunderland for the Jul-Sep quarter, 1861.⁸

Within a year Pierre married for the second time, on 7th June 1862. The bride was Susannah Chevell, and the marriage

registered for the Apr-Jun quarter of 1862 at Sunderland. The marriage certificate records Pierre's age as 54 (incorrect) and his occupation was given as French interpreter. He was a resident of High Street, Sunderland, and the son of Paul Ortiger, deceased, a carpenter. This was a second marriage also for Susannah, described as a 47 (again incorrect) year old widow, of Silver Street, Sunderland, and daughter of William Denn, deceased, agricultural labourer. The marriage took place at St Mary's Catholic Chapel, Sunderland. Neither Susannah nor one of the witnesses, John Hagerty, was able to write their names. Pierre was literate, as was the other witness, one Mary Brown. We do not have much more information about Susannah, except that her first husband had been William Chevell, a dock labourer, and that both hailed from Cambridgeshire, William from Ely and Susannah from Littleport. For the 1851 census they were living at Drypool, Kingston-upon Hull.⁹

The marriage was cut short by the death of Susannah Ortiger, on 16th January at the age of 67, as registered at Sunderland for the Jan-Mar quarter of 1869, and within a very short time Pierre again walked up the aisle, this time at the Anglican Parish Church of St John at Seaham Harbour, Durham. The marriage of Pierre Ortiger and Sarah Lidgerton, both of full age, was celebrated on 9th March 1869, in the presence of Thomas Lidgerton and Jane Armstrong. Sarah, a spinster of Seaham Harbour, was a daughter of Thomas Moffat Lidgerton, a joiner. Pierre was still listed as an interpreter. I would imagine that his services would have been in demand in a shipping port, and one with regular sea traffic to and from France.¹⁰

Listed as Peter and Sarah Ortige, for the 1871 census the couple was living at 14 and 15 Wear Street, Wearmouth, and with them was Sarah's father Thomas. It seems that sometime, and perhaps in the previous decade, Pierre had attained British nationality.¹¹

Peter Ortiger	Head	M	68	Water Clerk	France (British Subject)
Sarah Ortiger	Wife	M	57	Water Clerk's wife	Monkwearmouth, Durham
Thomas Lidgerton	F-in-L	W	84	Formerly Joiner	Monkwearmouth, Durham

Sarah was one of the daughters of Thomas Moffitt and Jane Lidgerton, and she was at home with her family for the 1851 census at 6 Carter Street, Bishopwearmouth, under the surname Tidgerton.¹²

Thomas Moffitt Tidgerton	Head	M	64	Joiner	Monkwearmouth, Durham
Jane Tidgerton	Wife	M	58		Walsingham, Durham
Sarah Tidgerton	Daur	U	30	Grocer	Monkwearmouth, Durham
Elizabeth Tidgerton	Daur	U	23	Dressmaker	Monkwearmouth, Durham
Thomas Tidgerton	Son	U	20	Sail Maker	Monk Wearmouth, Durham

Ten years later for the 1861 census, and now living at 6 Church Street Seaham Harbour, Sarah is still at home. An elder sister had been widowed, as had their father. The family surname proved a challenge for the census enumerators!¹³

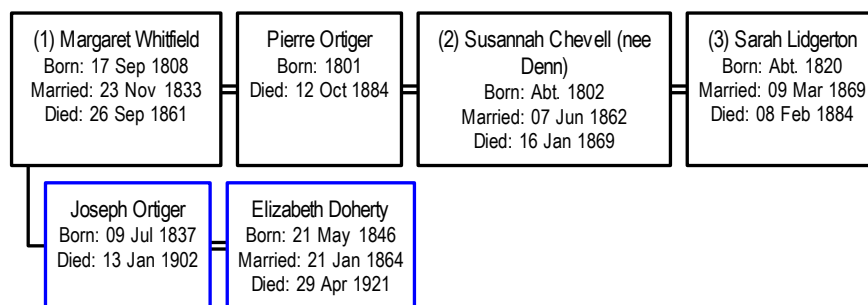
Thomas Hidgerton	Head	W	74	Joiner	Monkwearmouth, Durham
Ann Hemsley	Daur	W	47	Straw Bonnet Maker	Monkwearmouth, Durham
Sarah Ledgerton	Daur	U	40		Monkwearmouth, Durham
Thomas Tidgerton	Daur	U	29	Sail Maker	Monkwearmouth, Durham
Margaret Hemsley	GdDaur		12		Monk Wearmouth, Durham

So when she finally married, Sarah was a middle-aged woman nearly 50 years of age. She and Pierre (with his first name transcribed as Prover!) were living at 21 Hardwick Street, Monkwearmouth Shore, in April 1881. The Ortiger family tree shows that Pierre was a ship chandler, and presumably it was in that line he was a general dealer. Certainly, his earlier working life as a mariner would have well equipped him for the trade.¹⁴

Pierre Ortiger	Head	M	80	General Dealer	France
Sarah Ortiger	Wife	M	60		Sunderland, Durham

Within a few years both had died. Sarah died at the age of 64 on 8th February 1884, and her death was registered at Sunderland for the Jan-Mar quarter. Pierre Ortiger's death was also registered at Sunderland in 1884 for Oct-Dec quarter.¹⁵

According to the death certificate, Pierre died on 12th October 1884 at the Workhouse, Hylton Road, Sunderland. His age was given as 83 and his occupation as formerly interpreter and now a marine store dealer of Sunderland. The cause of death was senile decay. The informant was one Ann Hemsley, his sister-in-law of 48 Queens Street West, Sunderland. Ann was an older sister of Pierre's third wife, Sarah. Ann's husband William, a sail maker had died sometime between 1851 and 1861, and as recorded above, Ann was back living with her father for the 1861 census.¹⁶



Monkwearmouth is an area of Sunderland located at the north side of the mouth of the River Wear. It was one of the three original settlements on the banks of the River Wear along with Bishopwearmouth and Sunderland, the area now known as the East End. It includes the area around St. Peter's Church and was once the main centre of Wearside shipbuilding and coalmining in the town.

Sunderland was long an important coal port, but the industry for which the town was until recently better known was shipbuilding. Since 1346 when a certain Thomas Menville was recorded as building vessels here, Sunderland has had a shipbuilding industry and indeed it is claimed that shipbuilding had taken place in even earlier times. In 1885 a primitive 2000 year old dug out canoe, was found in the River Wear at Sunderland near Hylton, in the north west of the town. This is claimed to be the first example of Sunderland boat building workmanship.

Whatever the origins of shipbuilding on Wearside, by 1814 Sunderland had 24 shipyards, a figure which had risen to 65 in 1840. By the mid twentieth century, when the town produced more than a quarter of the nation's total tonnage of merchant and naval ships for World War Two Sunderland was widely regarded as the largest shipbuilding town in the world. Sadly, despite strong opposition from workers and community leaders, Sunderland's last shipyards were closed down in 1988.



Notes

- ¹ Notes prepared by Edith Mary Ortiger (Sister Mary of the Assumption) on file.
- ² Details of Pierre Ortiger's home town and the photograph were provided by Stuart Rochester.
- ³ Ortiger Family Tree; FreeBMD Birth Index 1837-1915; notes on Pierre and Margaret provided by Stuart Rochester.
- ⁴ IGI Individual Record Batch No P012501 1765-1825; emails from Sister Mary Joseph to Richard Ortiger (Father Stephen), 9th December 2009 and 13th January 2010; Sister Mary refers to a 1781 census as the basis for suggesting a Northallerton birth place for Eleanor Brown/Whitfield.
- ⁵ HO107/310/1/p33; FreeBMD Birth Index 1837-1915.
- ⁶ HO107/2396/p10.
- ⁷ RG9/3780/p3.
- ⁸ Ortiger Family Tree; FreeBMD Death Index 1837-1915; Robinson-Hayes Family Tree <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=kmr&id=10152>.
- ⁹ FreeBMD Marriage Index; certified copy of Marriage Certificate MXE453309; HO107/2306/600/p3; there was a 'clan' of Chevells living in the Ely district of Cambridgeshire where William Chevell had been born; Robinson-Hayes Family Tree.
- ¹⁰ BMD Marriage and Death Index 1837-1915; certified copy of Marriage Certificate MXE453010; Sarah's father's middle name was given as Moffat, but for the census returns cited this was rendered as Moffit; Robinson-Hayes Family Tree.
- ¹¹ RG10/5006/p67.
- ¹² HO107/2396/p16.
- ¹³ RG9/3748/p50.
- ¹⁴ RG11/5008/p77.
- ¹⁵ FreeBMD Death Index 1837-1915.
- ¹⁶ Certified copy of Death Certificate DYC340655; Robinson-Hayes Family Tree.