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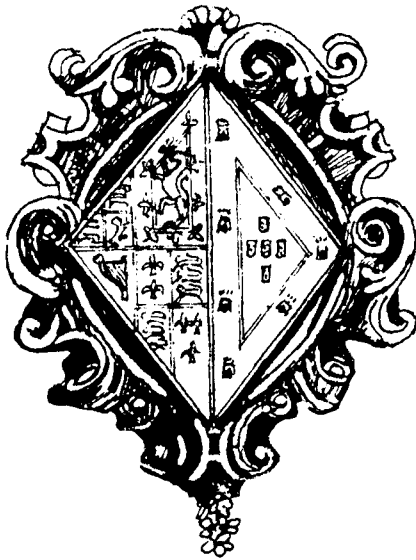
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## SOME ENGLISH ANCESTORS OF MINE

By Mafalda Croft de Moura

On reading the "*Casa da Lapa*", a book about an old house in the *Rua do Sacramento à Lapa*, Lisbon, my interest was aroused when I discovered that an ancestor of mine, Robert Lucas, is mentioned as having lived there from 1821-1827. This book was published by the Luso American Foundation which now owns the house.



Robert Lucas



Charlotte Lucas, Wife of Robert

Robert Lucas was born in London in 1779. He was a successful wine merchant of the firm Holford, Lucas & Co. and joined the English Factory in 1807. As its Treasurer he became quite prominent in the life of the firm, being responsible for the signing of many important documents relating to the Factory's Hospital during the Peninsular War. This Hospital was built by Gerard de Visme, and was sited where the present St. George's Church Parsonage is – now

rented to a University. Wellington, it seems, was interested in requisitioning it for his troops.

As well as being Treasurer of the Factory, he was also an active member of the British Colony serving on the Committee for the Church, Hospital and Ground Administration, and he was also a Hospital Visitor, according to the records.

He married Charlotte March in 1806 and had five daughters. Charlotte who married William Wynn, Anna who married a Brazilian diplomat Álvaro Teixeira Macedo, Emily Martha who married Sir Francis Cook. He had two spinster daughters, Sophia and Eliza.

It is of interest to note that it was Sir Francis Cook, Bart (1<sup>st</sup> Viscount of Monserrate) who acquired de Visme's property in Sintra – Monserrate.

The eldest daughter, Charlotte, married William Wynn and so was to become my great great grandmother. She was born in 1812 and married in 1839. One of her daughters, Charlotte Elizabeth, married Walter Parsons Custance and hence also my connection with this very old Norfolk family.

A Squire Custance is mentioned in Parson Woodeforde's Diary. The family seat was Weston Hall, which no longer exists but it was fairly close to Norwich. There are various documents in the family possession recalling how the name Custance was originally "De Coutance", from Normandy and the founder had come over to England with William the Conqueror. True or not, the fact remains that it was a very old family. There is a record of a Gautier de Coutance as early as 1140 in England. It is also stated that as from about 1300 the family began to be called Custance.

Walter Custance was born in 1848 and was the son of Thomas Custance and Antónia Eugénia de Brito Barbosa. He had an older brother and nine older sisters! These brothers and sisters in turn

married an O'Neill, a Kendall, a Moller, a Garland, a Portugal e Castro, a Ferreira Pinto Basto and a Shaw.

It is not surprising, therefore, that at a dance at which a girl was dancing with Walter and, on enquiring about the various other girls dancing, was told that they were all his sisters! She was astounded when told that indeed they were.

Walter Custance brings me to the threshold of my third English family connection – the Croft family. His eldest daughter Lucy (my paternal grandmother) married José Maria Croft de Moura. The Croft family of Castle Croft and of Saxon origin, settled in Hereford at a very remote period! There was also another branch of the family in York.

Due to information that was lost we have difficulty in tracing which branch we belong to. It is thought that two Croft cousins came out to Portugal, one settling in Oporto and the other in Lisbon. There are family crests on graves in St James' cemetery in Oporto and the British Cemetery in Lisbon which are very similar.

In Lisbon, the first Croft related to our family was George Croft. He was an important landowner and industrialist having founded an important factory in Marinha Grande. He was made 1<sup>o</sup> Visconde da Graça – the title taking its name from his property – *Quinta da Graça* – in Olivais. Eça de Queiroz mentions him in the "*Maias*" under the name of Craft.

He was born in 1808 in Manchester and married Maria Luciana de Oliveira Croft, daughter of the Barão de Barcelinhos.

He had three children, a son Thomas Elmsley de Oliveira Croft (2<sup>nd</sup> Visconde de Graça) and two daughters Luciana Maria de Oliveira Croft and Cecilia de Oliveira Croft. The son married twice having no children from either marriage. His first wife, who died two years after their marriage was Ana Mafalda Mendonça Coutinho Seabra, daughter of the Conde de Abrigada. His second marriage was to Julieta Sales da Cunha Galvão who was born in Rio de Janeiro and

daughter of a member of the Council of the Brazilian Emperor D. Pedro II.

The chronicles of the time describe her as a very beautiful and elegant woman. They also mention that both she and her husband used to ride through Lisbon in an open carriage, with a footman seated at the back. A novelty in the Lisbon of those days. In her time many were the sumptuous balls given at their Intendente Palace.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Visconde was a famous bullfighter equally proficient on foot or on horseback and was mentioned in many tauromachic papers of the time. This was quite rare in those days especially for someone of English descent.

Of the two daughters it was Luciana Maria who was my great grandmother. She married Manuel de Moura Valdez – a *Fidalgo Cavaleiro da Casa Real*. Widowed, she later remarried the Conde de Porto Covo da Bandeira and lived in the *Palácio Porto Covo*, in the *Rua de São Domingos à Lapa* for quite a number of years. This Palace was occupied until recently by the British Embassy. Our family inherited a great part of the magnificent crystal “*baixela de Porto Covo*” by Pierre Philippe Thomire. The remainder of this “*baixela*” is to be seen in the Ajuda Palace.

It was one of her sons, José Maria de Croft de Moura who married my grandmother – Lucy Custance. They had four children: Luciana Carlota, George, Thomaz and Helena. I have thus arrived at our present generation for Thomaz was my father.

By this account I hope to shed some light on the origins of the Croft de Moura family in Portugal

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**Mafalda Croft de Moura, together with her brother, Tom, and sisters Joan and Rita are long time members of the British Historical Society.**

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