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THE ENGLISH SHERIFF DURING THE
REIGN OF KING EDWARD I

DISSERTATION
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Boyd Breslow, B.A., M.A.

* * * * * *

The Ohio State University
1968

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ABBREVIATIONS

C.C.R.: Calendar of Close Rolls 1272- (H. M. Stationery Office, 1900-).

C.P.R.: Calendar of Patent Rolls 1232- (H. M. Stationery Office, 1906-).

E159/: PRO, Exchequer, King's Remembrance Memoranda Rolls.

E368/: PRO, Exchequer, Lord Treasurer's Remembrance Memoranda Rolls.

Fine Rolls: Calendar of Fine Rolls 1272- (H. M. Stationery Office, 1911-).


Inquisitions: Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry III- (H. M. Stationery Office, 1904-).


INTRODUCTION

The term "sheriff" has so common a usage in the Anglo-American tradition that it hardly seems worthy of additional comment. Depending on one's interests and age, the word brings to mind the lawman of the American frontier, the evil official who harassed Englishmen and who came into conflict with the noted outlaw, Robinhood and his band of men, and the public officer who still retains a role in the English and American governments. To the constitutional and administrative historian of medieval England, the sheriff is no romantic figure; he was, rather, the functionary upon whom the very foundations of local government and royal justice were constructed after the Norman conquest.

The functions of the sheriff and the operation of the office have been set forth in scholarly works by W. A. Morris and H. M. Cam.\(^1\) Morris in *The Medieval English Sheriff to 1300* discussed at length the origins of the office, both from the Anglo-Saxon reeve and the Norman viscount; and he considered the personnel, the shrieval

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\(^1\) Besides the works by Morris and Cam also helpful is Geoffrey Templeman, *The Sheriff of Warwickshire in the Thirteenth Century*, *The Dugdale Society Occasional Papers*, No. 7 (Oxford, 1948) [Hereafter cited as Templeman].
duties, and the awards and abuses of the position. Helen Cam's works on the sheriff, *The Hundred and Hundred Rolls* and "Studies in the Hundred Rolls," attempted to present a picture of local government in the late Henrician and Edwardian periods of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. In accomplishing her purpose she devoted considerable space to the sheriff who, after all, was a vital part of local government.

There is a general theme discernible in the works of both Cam and Morris and supported by Templeman. Having once attained a dominant position in the county as the chief executive officer and the head of the king's judicial system in the shire, the sheriff lost much of his independence and power to new officials and controls imposed upon him by the central government. Generally, during the Norman period the sheriff was selected from the great feudal barons and exercised considerable authority independent of the royal government; however, the crown instituted various means to control the sheriff and make him more responsive to the central government. As early as Henry I's reign, the king required the sheriff to come to

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2 Morris, pp. vii-ix.
3 Cam, *Hundred Rolls*, p. vii.
4 See Templeman.
5 Morris, pp. 167, 204-5, 238-39; Cam, *Hundred Rolls*, pp. 7-8; Templeman, pp. 3-4, 17.
Westminster to account for the county's revenues, sent out exchequer officials to check on the sheriff's activities, and appointed justices to sit with the sheriff in the county court. Henry II continued the process by appointing to the office of sheriff men who were closely attached to and dependent upon the crown for their positions instead of the great feudal barons. In this way Henry and his sons hoped to maintain greater control over the sheriffs. Richard and John carried on and completed their ancestors' designs; and during these two reigns, especially John's, these loyal, trusted, and dependent appointees became the instrument through which the Angevins centralized government in the counties.

Morris contends that in spite of the creation of the itinerant justices who assumed certain judicial functions once solely exercised by the sheriff in the county and in spite of the change in the personnel of the shrieval office holder, the sheriff continued to exercise extensive powers in local government through John's reign. Although the itinerant justices tended to limit the sheriff's judicial role, he still participated actively in county judicial business; for the county court was not yet

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6 Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 3-4.
7 Morris, pp. 111, 113, 114, 135, 138-39, 140-41, 143; Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 6; Templeman, p. 4.
8 Morris, pp. 143, 163-65.
relegated to an inferior status. The sheriff, moreover, served the new royal courts by providing them with information and executing their decrees. Throughout the reigns of the first three Angevin kings the sheriff continued to serve as the crown's chief fiscal agent, collecting the traditional county revenues owed to the crown, participating in the assessment and collection of special levies, and disbursing funds. In the same period the sheriff commanded the county military forces and served as the chief law enforcement officer in the shire. Besides these responsibilities the sheriff had a variety of administrative duties which included among many the execution of royal writs, making the tourn of the shire, viewing the frankpledge, conducting inquests, and maintaining public works in the county.  

Morris, Cam, and Templeman assert that during Henry III's reign the powers of the sheriff were greatly limited. With the expansion of the royal courts the county court's business and the sheriff's judicial duties were limited significantly except as the sheriff served the royal court in an executive capacity or carried out a judicial role imposed upon him by a royal writ. The sheriff lost almost all connection with the county military establishment. He remained the shire's chief law

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9Morris, pp. 115, 118, 119, 120-21, 123, 134, 144-53; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 4-5.
enforcement official and administrator, carrying on those activities already noted for the Angevin period. Nevertheless these responsibilities were restricted by the creation of new officials, the coroner, escheator, and custodian of the peace, who either assumed entirely shrieval duties or shared with him what had once been exclusively within his jurisdiction. True, the sheriff executed innumerable writs issued by the central government; but the execution of these directives was a limitation upon the sheriff because they came from the central government and were not initiated by the sheriff.  

Only in the area of fiscal responsibilities did the sheriff's duties expand during the reigns of Henry III and Edward I. As an agent of the exchequer, he continued to collect the traditional county revenues, judicial fines, feudal payments, and distrainments of property. At various times he participated in the assessment and collection of taxes; and as taxation became a regular source of income, the sheriff found himself increasingly involved with fiscal matters for the royal government.  

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Morris and Cam, and, to some extent, Templeman attempt to demonstrate that during the thirteenth century the sheriff lost much of the formidable power once consigned to his office and that by the time of Edward I the sheriff had become primarily the crown's fiscal agent in the county. All three authors rely heavily upon evidence taken from the period preceding Edward's reign. Also these three historians are inclined to give considerable weight to the proposition that the royal government limited shrieval power in order to bring the sheriff more directly under the control of the royal government and in order to check the abuses and maladministration of which the sheriff was often accused. Because of the limitations in the study made by Cam, Templeman, and Morris it seems that an investigation into the office of sheriff in the late Henrician and especially the Edwardian period is necessary in order to sustain, reject, or modify their thesis. Also it seems necessary to determine if the question of shrieval corruption was as significant a factor in relieving the sheriff of some of his duties as the authors suggest.\textsuperscript{12}

By the second half of the thirteenth century the expansion of the government bureaucracy required a greatly increased staff. This bureaucracy included the personnel in the exchequer, chancery, courts, wardrobe, and the vast

\textsuperscript{12}Templeman, p. 6; Morris, pp. 167-69.
number of local officials of which the sheriff was but one. Since the sheriff was part of this organization, questions arise about the sheriff's relationship to it—to what extent was the sheriff part of the bureaucracy, to what extent does he comprise part of what we might call a royal civil service? If a man held the office of sheriff in many counties or if he held many positions of which the office of sheriff was only one, then one can suggest that the man who became a sheriff was part of an experienced group of administrators.

Cam in her article on the sheriffs of Cambridge and Huntingdon and Templeman in his article on the sheriffs in Warwick and Leicester touch upon the civil service question. Both, however, deal with the sheriff in the context of the thirteenth century and do not consider the point in any great detail. This study will consider the matter in much greater depth, concentrating on the Edwardian period and the men who became sheriffs in Norfolk, Suffolk, Northampton, Northumberland, Shropshire, and Staffordshire.

Because the administrative system was closely tied to the social structure, it was necessary to deal with the sheriff's social status. During the thirteenth century the

\[\text{Cam, "Cambridgeshire Sheriffs in the Thirteenth Century," Liberties and Communities in Medieval England (Cambridge, 1944) [Hereafter cited as Communities].}\]
great tenants in chief were largely replaced as sheriffs. Supposedly the sheriff and many local officials were drawn from the knightly class. These knights became servants of the king, the men upon whom the responsibilities of local government devolved. This dissertation will consider the sheriffs in the six counties of Shropshire, Staffordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Northumberland, and Northampton in order to determine the social origins and status of the men who held the office. It will also involve an examination of the land holdings of the sheriffs in order to determine if they came from the region in which they served and in order to fix their status in the class structure. In addition some effort will be made to describe the sheriffs' family relationships in order to understand how the knights were related to each other and the great baronial families.  

Why study the sheriff during Edward I's reign? This of course is a reasonable question, and the most compelling explanation is that Edward was a great reformer and innovator in government, perhaps as important to English constitutional, legal, and administrative developments as William the Conqueror or Henry II. Did Edward simply continue a process of change with regard to the

sheriff? Was he responsible for bringing the knights into government not only as sheriffs but in many other governmental roles? Did Edward carry on a process developed by his Angevin ancestors? Seemingly he carried on a tradition in regard to the sheriffs and knights which dates to his grandfather's reign, if not earlier.
CHAPTER I

THE SHERIFF AND HIS ROLE IN ENGLISH GOVERNMENT

When Edward I ascended the throne in 1272, the nature of the office of sheriff had changed considerably, not only since its importation by the Norman conquerors, but since the time of Edward's grandfather and father. In spite of the modifications the sheriff remained an important official, continually involved in law enforcement, judicial affairs, public administration, and financial business, of which the last became his major preoccupation.\(^1\)

Throughout the Norman and early Angevin regimes the kings appointed their sheriffs from great tenants in chief who in turn constituted a primary factor in local government. During the thirteenth century, however, the sheriff's responsibilities differed along with changes in the personnel who staffed the office. The great magnates were replaced by men of lower standing in the social-political structure; and these new men while still exercising great authority no longer conducted themselves as virtually independent local powers. The sheriff had become

\(^1\)Morris, pp. 192, 213, 218-19, 241.
an agent of the crown and served in a strictly subordinate role to the king and his central administrative machinery.2

Perhaps the most obvious way in which the central government limited the sheriff's powers was through the creation of new county administrators who assumed responsibilities formerly within the purview of the sheriff himself. The escheators, royal justices, coroners, custodians of the peace, as well as numerous commissions for array, tax collecting, or tax assessing assumed shrieval duties and, as in the case of the coroners, also served as a check upon shrieval excesses. The sheriff, nevertheless, continued to provide a service for the new officials in that the sheriff often assisted them in the performance of their duties.3

While the thirteenth century witnessed the decline in the control exercised over local government by the sheriff, it also saw an increase in his duties; however,

\footnotesize
2 Templeman, pp. 4, 17; Morris, p. 192.

\footnotesize
now the sheriff generally acted only in response to royal writs. Perhaps the change came about as the royal government attempted to extend its power at the expense of the great feudal lords and prevent recurring abuses perpetrated by the sheriff against the county's inhabitants.\(^4\)

This chapter will deal with two general themes: The first will be a survey of shrieval activities during Edward I's reign; the second will evaluate the thesis put forward by Morris, Cam, and Templeman that the sheriff's powers had declined greatly by Edward's accession.

Even before Edward became king the most important central governmental department with which the sheriff dealt was the exchequer. Surely the fact that the sheriff's appointment passed from the chancellor's jurisdiction to the exchequer reflects the sheriff's altered relationship to the royal government in that the growing financial needs of the king hastened the transformation of the sheriff's role into a fiscal one by Edward's death.\(^5\) By whatever

\(^4\)Templeman, p. 17; Morris, pp. 192, 239.

\(^5\)Morris, pp. 241-42; Cam, Communities, p. 31. Cam suggests that the increased financial demands made against the sheriff accounts for the change. This is reflected in the doubling of the Cambridgeshire farm during Edward's reign; Thomas Madox, *The History and Antiquates of the Exchequer of the Kings of England in two Periods*, 2 vols. (London, 1769) [Hereafter cited as Madox, I or II], pp. 142-43 b. "Sheriffs of Northumberland," discusses the shrieval tenure. According to Hunter Blair, sheriffs held office during royal pleasure; and in spite of efforts to limit his tenure (Cam, Communities, p. 34, indicates the Provisions of Oxford set office holding at one year), no true success
means one explains the sheriff's changing role, it should be noted that he was fully accountable to the exchequer for many revenues exacted from his county. At one time the sheriff retained some profits from his bailiwick; but since John's reign, the crown gradually absorbed them to its own use.

The ferm was one of those revenues collected by the sheriff. The ferm, generally speaking, is defined as the

came about until Edward III. In 1300 a brief but apparently unsuccessful attempt was initiated to have sheriffs elected by suitors to the county court. See C.C.R., 1296-1303, pp. 362, 404. "To the coroners and whole community of the counties of Oxford and Berks. Order to choose, if they wish, as sheriff for those counties one who best knows and can execute the office, and to present him to the treasurer and barons of the exchequer on the morrow of Michaelmas next by a lawful and circumspect man on their behalf with their letters patent under the seals of six of the more discreet and upright knights of those counties, so that he may there, after taking the usual oath, do and exercise what pertains to the office of sheriff in those counties, as the king has granted to his people among other things for the common utility of his realm that they may have, if they wish, the election of sheriffs in each county of the realm where there are no sheriffs of fee. They are informed that if they do not present such an election on the said day, the treasurer and barons will provide the king with a sheriff to be set over them" (p. 404); Hunisett, p. 192; Cam, Communities, p. 33.

Morris, p. 241. The obligations might vary from county to county. Liberties and municipal corporations might account separately.

Morris, p. 281. The desire on the part of the king to secure more revenues may have prompted the kings to replace the great barons with lesser men. Perhaps the crown could more easily compel new men, seeking to improve their status in royal service, to surrender these revenues. The new men had no traditional claims upon the county funds.
annual rent from the county which the sheriffs gathered without special royal order. Originally an income for the sheriff, it had become a source for augmenting the royal treasury. The sheriff's aid, like the ferm, was one of the traditional shire levies exacted by the sheriff on his tourn. Seemingly, the aid originated as a means to defray the sheriff's expenses; but this too ultimately became a royal revenue. The aid was commonly assessed on geldable land although never uniformly from county to county.

Along with the aid, the sheriff sometimes was paid an aid known as **palefridus vicecomitis** which seems to have been an ancient privilege which allowed the sheriff to take fodder

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8Mabel Mills, ed., *The Pipe Roll for 1295*, Surrey Membrane, Surrey Record Society, Vol. XXI (1924) [Hereafter cited as *Surrey Pipe Roll*], pp. v, 3; Morris, pp. 125, 185. "The sheriff's usual relationship to the county is expressed in custodianship. In relation to its issues he was either firmarius or custos." If he held by firm, he owed the ferm. In custos, he did not. A county was let at a certain sum; this sum is the ferm. What the sheriff collected above the ferm he might keep for himself.

9N. Neilson, *Customary Rents* (Oxford, 1910) [Hereafter cited as Neilson], pp. 124-29; Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 127. Perhaps the earliest assessments for the aid were made against each hundred within the shire and then subdivided among the vills. *Rotuli Hundredorum*, 2 vols. (London, 1812, 1818) [Hereafter cited as Rot. Hund.], i, p. 335.n.e. "Postea convictum est per xi et vicecomitem quod terra illa est geldabilis et quod dominus Rex est seisitus de auxilio vicecomitis et omnibus alliis geldis per manum Elye de Rabayn capitalis domini illius ita quod nichil inde deperdit domino Regi."
for his animals while on the tourn. Numerous other payments came to the sheriff, including tithing money, and the feudal dues of scutage, aids, and relief. The sheriff regularly assessed pontage which he did not surrender to the exchequer but retained for road and bridge maintenance in the county. He also gathered in summonses, tallage, minute particulars of forest, minute particulars of serjeanties, purprestures, and castle ward, all of which were owed by him to the king's treasury.

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10 Neilson, p. 129, n. 2; Rot. Hund. ii, pp. 291, 297. "Et hundredum de Pepindune valet per annum vii l. et palefridus vicomitis" (p. 291). "... et reddit ad palefridum per annum" (p. 297).


12 C.C.R., 1272-79, 12; Neilson, pp. 137, 139.

13 Mills, Surrey Pipe Roll, pp. v-vi. "... the summonses [collected by the sheriff] were the casual revenue incidental to the action of one of the King's courts—i.e., the money was due on account of some administrative process in either Chancery, the Exchequer, or one of the Benches, or before the Justices in Eyre." Originalia and Estreat Rolls were sent to the Exchequer from which the summonses were drawn up and sent to the sheriff.

14 C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 433; Morris, p. 262, n. 146; Mills, Surrey Pipe Rolls, pp. vii, viii, xiii, 9; Cam, Hundred Rolls. Some of the customary revenues paid on the tourn: Assisted rents, wardsilver, hordersgyft, tourn money, lathescot, hidage, sheriff's aid, and perhaps, cert-money, tithing-penney, head-money.
The process of collection and payment occurred in three stages: As noted above, the sheriff and his agents exacted the obligations due; the sheriff prepared his records for his accounting; and finally the presentation and accounting made at the exchequer. The payment and accounting began at the exchequer in Michaelmas term when the sheriff made his proffer or offered partial payment on his debts. At this session he might receive his dies datus ad computandum which might come any time within the nine months following Michaelmas. He finished his accounting for the shire and surrendered his rolls, tallies, writs, vouchers, and outstanding money at the upper exchequer for an audit. Even the representatives from private liberties or debtors, such as a former sheriff, had to present their records with the sheriff's so that the exchequer could complete the audit for the shire and so that the sheriff could justify his expenditures and allocations made before the audit. Once the account was made, the remnants of unpaid debts and revenues were preserved in the Pipe Roll.

15 Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 88-89; Mills, Surrey Pipe Rolls, p. x.
16 Mills, Surrey Pipe Rolls, pp. ii, xi, xiv; Morris, pp. 251-52, 255.
17 Morris, p. 265.
Throughout the thirteenth century, the traditional revenues were not adequate for governmental needs. Consequently, the king regularly turned to levying special taxes. Not unexpectedly the sheriff became involved with these taxes, but his role differed from his fiscal responsibility for the customary shire monies, for the extraordinary assessments and their collection often fell to special commissions appointed by the crown for this particular purpose. The sheriff assisted the commissioners in levying the taxes and commonly with their collection.\(^{19}\) Sometimes, however, sheriffs were named to these commissions.\(^{20}\) Regardless of the sheriff's participation in the assessment and collection, the commissions frequently surrendered the money to the sheriff who then was charged with conveying and accounting for it at the exchequer or using it to pay debts incurred by the king. For example, William Hamelyn, sheriff of Warwick and Leicester,

\(^{19}\)Templeman, pp. 7, 36; Mitchell, pp. 7-8; Willard, p. 183; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 250, 439, 459; C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 261; C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 261.

delivered part of the fifteenth to merchants from Lucca in order to acquit the king of certain obligations.\textsuperscript{21}

The scope of the sheriff's fiscal duties did not end with county dues and taxes but involved him in debts owed to the crown. One needs only to examine any treasury record to realize the magnitude of this assignment. Twice each year, at Michaelmas and Easter, the exchequer sent to each county a list of debtors. When the sheriff received the writ for a debt, he dispatched it to the proper hundred bailiff who supposedly made the collection and returned money and writ to the sheriff.\textsuperscript{22} The origin for the obligations came from nearly every kind of revenue which the individual might owe the government, and the sheriff might be called upon to collect private debts as well.\textsuperscript{23}

The sheriff's role in debt collection was extremely important. Because so much was owed to the government and because the government frequently found itself in an

\textsuperscript{21}C.C.R., 1272-81, pp. 78, 190, 191; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{22}Mills, Surrey Pipe Rolls, pp. i, ix, 7. Each year at Michaelmas and at Easter the sheriff received a list of summonses of the Pipe. These were debts owed to the king and which the sheriff was supposed to collect.

\textsuperscript{23}Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 42, 95; Morris, pp. 257-58; El59/48, m. 3, 8; El59/50 m. 25d; El59/51, m. 23; C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 5, 331; Lilburn, "Northumberland Pipe," Vol. 38, pp. 179, 327-35. Some of the collections owed the crown were amercements, failure to prosecute, illegal detention, leave to agree, failure to arrest, trespass.
impecunious position, the king relied on payment of overdue obligations to meet his own expenses.\textsuperscript{24} Exacting debts for the king, although a major task, did not conclude the sheriff's functions in this area of finance. He granted debt recognitions and received and executed writs authorizing respite.\textsuperscript{25}

A large share of the money delivered to the sheriff for transmission to the exchequer never reached its destination. For either the central government through writs directed him to make payments out of his funds, or he expended sums in the fulfillment of his shrivelal duties. Salaries or expenses for judges, tax collectors, persons on royal missions, members of parliament, crossbowmen, gate keepers, goshawkers, and Florentine creditors to the king came from the sheriff's revenues.\textsuperscript{26} These same revenues provided the sheriff with money to maintain castles and

\textsuperscript{24}Morris, p. 259; E159/48, m. 8; E159/54, m 1 d.

\textsuperscript{25}E159/48 m. 69; E159/54 m. 18 d.; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 6, 516; C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 249.

\textsuperscript{26}E159/48 mm. 5, 20; E159/57, mm. 2, 9; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 6, 83, 170, 288, 530, 546; C.C.R., T279-88, pp. 6, 30, 87, 103; C.C.R., 1288-96, p. 268; C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 477; Mills, \textit{Surrey Pipe Rolls}, pp. x-xi; Templeman, p. 35 n. 2.
walls, keep prisoners and hostages as well as pay alms to the poor and religious houses.\textsuperscript{27}

It is evident from the listed expenses credited to the sheriff by the exchequer that he served as a major disbursing agent for the royal government. This situation apparently prevailed until Edward I's wars. During the war years the sheriff came into close association with the wardrobe which seemingly became the war treasury.\textsuperscript{28} While the sheriff transported money, paid expenses for knights, horses, saddles, purveyance of food, and provisioning garrisons for the wardrobe, generally, the sheriff was repaid by the wardrobe in order to account at the exchequer.\textsuperscript{29} Towards the close of Edward's reign, the sheriff's relationship to the wardrobe became closer than previously noted, for many of the revenues and debts formerly delivered to the exchequer went immediately to the wardrobe. The new condition reflected the efforts to

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{28}Morris, p. 273. Apparently the wardrobe assumed the expenses.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{29}Wardrobe, pp. 54, 75, 76, 81, 95-96, 106, 107, 109.
\end{quote}
finance the Scottish campaigns and the direct part the wardrobe assumed in this area. 30

The sheriff's role as fiscal agent for the crown certainly loomed large in his responsibilities. But this task was not the only one left the sheriff at the end of the thirteenth century. He still retained a large sphere of administrative and judicial duties. The Norman and Angevin kings placed a great emphasis on maintaining the peace. A major share of keeping law and order fell to the sheriff although the introduction of the coroner and conservator pacis began to limit the sheriff's law enforcement duties by the time of Edward I. 31

As chief law officer of the county, the sheriff had to seize the king's enemies and bring the accused before the king's justices. The sheriff arrested any person charged with the commission of a crime. The undersheriff,  

30Wardrobe, p. vi; Morris, p. 249.

31"Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 17; Morris, pp. 221-22; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 69-71; C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 25. "To the sheriff of Dorset. Like order, enjoining him to make known to all bailiffs in liberties or elsewhere and to cause to be proclaimed in all county [courts] that they shall apply all diligence for keeping of the peace in their custodies, and so conduct themselves that the king may not have to punish them in this behalf and if any of these county [courts] or liberties will not behave themselves diligently in this or will not assist the sheriff at his order, the sheriff is to certify the king thereof without delay, so that the king may proceed against them as consenting to such robberies and homicides. The like to all sheriffs in England."
royal or franchisal bailiff might perform the deed but the responsibility belonged to the sheriff. The king's enemies included any person accused of trespass, or, excommunicants, vagabonds, army deserters, dealers in bad money, murderers, and clergymen when they became involved in the conflict between Edward and Boniface. In addition, his obligation as a peace officer required the enforcement of Magna Carta and the Charter of Forests, maintenance of private rights, investigation of crimes, and, whenever possible, admission of a suspect to bail.

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32 Morris, pp. 214, 225-26, 224, 223; E159/48, m. 7; C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 141; C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 239, 308, 32; "Mandate . . . Adam de Wells, and the sheriff of Lincoln to receive in the king's name recognisance from prelates and other persons of the Holy Church in that county according to their riches, who wish to have the king's protection for the future, and to certify the chancellor and treasurer and barons of the Exchequer thereof, as it appears that some clerks and parsons have, to the king's rancour and indignation, refused to aid in the defence of the whole realm and the Church of England." C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 457-58, 516; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 30; C.C.R., 1296-1303, pp. 373, 379; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 333; Templeman, p. 25; Cam, Communities, p. 30. "... has to back up the university authorities in the maintenance of discipline if the chancellor and masters appeal to him [sheriff] he must go and arrest any scholar indicated and expel him from the university" (p. 30).

33 C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 434; C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 396; C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 178; E159/48, mm. 12, 13, 13 d; Morris, pp. 213, 223; Templeman, pp. 21 n. 2, 27. The sheriff had to investigate acts such as a death. He and the coroner had to determine the cause of death and make an arrest if there were suspicions of murder. Examples of other offenses investigated by the sheriff are theft and destruction of property.
The sheriff and his deputies had the assistance of the **posse comitatus**. As police the sheriff and his aids had the right and obligation to call upon the posse for help in making arrests or upholding the peace. The posse, which was composed of the whole county, came to the sheriff's support upon the raising of the hue and cry in each vill. The posse, although generally used to pursue criminals, was employed in guarding felons.\(^{34}\)

The **posse comitatus** was not the only means by which the sheriff and his staff upheld the king's peace. The sheriff's tour was very much part of the system. On the semi-annual visitation to each royal hundred the sheriff received the presentments of criminal offences which had to go before the king's justices. The sheriff heard and disposed of some minor offenses immediately. While on his visitation to the hundred, the sheriff inspected the frankpledge and local police system; and he and the coroners conducted any special inquests for the crown.\(^{35}\)

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\(^{34}\)C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 317; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 434; Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 76; Morris, pp. 227 n. 178, 228. The Statute of Westminster required the sheriff and bailiffs to keep horses and armour to pursue criminals after raising the hue and cry. A sheriff might be called upon to use the posse of two counties in pursuit of a felon.

\(^{35}\)Morris, pp. 192, 196, 203 n 279; Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 123, "Such judicial power-encroachment on public land, the removal of boundary marks, division of the water course, brewing or baking contrary to government regulations, dishonest weights and measures, the tricks of the trade practiced by tanners, curriers, butchers, and tailors. For such matters no royal writ was needed." Neilson, p. 163.
The numerous tasks required of the sheriff often prevented him from giving full attention to keeping the peace. The growing fiscal role must account in part for this shortcoming. Because the maintenance of public order remained a critical problem, especially for Edward I, gradually new officers assumed some of the commitment. The **custodes pacis**, for example, relieved the sheriff of some of his peace keeping work; but the sheriff during Edward's reign continued to hold a key role in the preservation of law.  

With the establishment of the royal itinerant courts as part of the English judicial system, the sheriff's role as a judge declined; nevertheless, he continued to provide and serve the courts in important matters. These services were largely ministerial or executive in nature. As soon as the sheriff received notice of the impending visit of the eyre, he convened the county court at the designated time and place for the royal judges. At the courts sitting he introduced crown pleas and summoned juries for the court. This last assignment, however, was

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36 Morris, pp. 228, 229.

37 Morris, p. 238; Cam, *Hundred Rolls*, p. 54.

often carried out for the eyre justices by knights of the country rather than the sheriff or his subordinate. 39

The relationship between the sheriff and other itinerant justices was much the same as it was to the eyre court. Seemingly, the sheriff was more involved with some; for example, he was charged with summoning assize men for assize juries and charged with having the assize juries and inquisitions before the justices. 40 When commissioners of gaol delivery came into the sheriff's bailiwick, he brought prisoners before the court and made certain that those who had conducted inquisitions into the cases were on hand. 41

Without reference to specific royal courts it should be noted that the sheriff performed several functions for the courts. He had to notify persons to appear before the justices and on what day the appearance was due.

39 Templeman, p. 21; Morris, p. 208; Cam, "Studies," p. 161; Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 81.

40 C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 548-49; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 365, "... the king orders the sheriff to cause all assizes, juries, and inquisitions arramed before his justices whomsoever in that county remained to be taken after Michaelmas next, together with the original writs and all other aids . . . to come before said justices at a certain day and place whereof they shall inform the sheriff." Morris, pp. 209-10.

41 Morris, p. 210. For a more detailed discussion of the sheriff and his role as a royal justice, see below the chapter which deals with the sheriff and his various offices. C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 218, 219, 227; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 93 present examples of sheriffs who held judicial commissions while holding the shrieval office too.
In cases where a defendant claimed essoin, the sheriff might have to investigate the validity of the claim and report his findings to the court. Since the king's courts could issue writs and pronounce amercements in the counties, the sheriff had to execute these decrees; and failure to execute or improper execution of the judicial orders could lead to the sheriff being fined or amerced.

Although the interjection of the royal courts and justices into county business tended to circumscribe shrieval authority, the sheriff retained some judicial power—especially in the county court and its judicial adjunct, the hundred court. The sheriff invariably found his judicial obligations a matter of great difficulty; the common law was spreading throughout England while the older legal traditions continued to operate. Thus his duties were "... exacting and complicated." In the county

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42 C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 223.

43 "Northumberland Pipe," Vol. 38, pp. 190-91; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 239; Morris, pp. 194, 211 n. 26, 212-13. During Edward I's life sheriffs seem to have ameced vills and individuals for not appearing before the sheriff for inquests. This was an illegal procedure, for the right to amerce belonged to the royal justices alone. "Sheriffs also had to execute writs of certiorari and dispatch before the justices at Westminster men to bear record of cases removed from the county court; to make attachments, distains and summonses; to send in long procession knights and law-worthy men who knew facts and could recite them upon oath, as well as prisoners to answer accusations and debtors of the king to make satisfaction" (Morris, pp. 212-13).

44 Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 107; Templeman, p. 18; Morris, p. 207.
court the sheriff performed two functions: He might act as bailiff in which case the suitors rendered judgment; or he might serve as a royal judge when so designated by a writ emanating from the crown.  

County courts met regularly, either every fourth or sixth week, to transact public business. Although it had lost a great deal of its judicial role since Henry II's reign, the sheriff as presiding officer continued to conduct legal matters. In criminal action the sheriff heard cases involving minor thefts, melee, trespass, beating and wounding, and if directed by writ, felony cases. While civil suits remained within his prerogative, the royal government steadily reduced sheriffal competency in civil and criminal matters during Edward I's lifetime. Royal justices heard many suits although the sheriff still heard these pleas so long as the amount involved did not exceed 40s. 

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45 Morris, pp. 192, 198.
46 Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 107, 109; Morris, pp. 192-93. In York, Lincoln, Lancaster, Chester, and Northumberland the courts met every sixth week. Legally the county court met for one day; however, additional business was transacted on the following day in what was described as the retrocomitatus.
47 Morris, pp. 196-97.
48 Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 115. A suitor could purchase a writ of justice which authorized the sheriff to hear cases involving 40s or more; otherwise, the king's justices heard these cases. Morris, p. 197; Templeman, p. 23.
A royal writ might extend the sheriff's civil judicial authority, for in effect such a writ made the sheriff a royal justice. In this capacity he did not simply preside over the court but rendered justice. The number and types of civil cases heard by royal writ depended upon the need of the government to supplement the royal courts.\textsuperscript{49}

In keeping with the sheriff's local judicial concerns he remained in charge of the hundred courts which were in the king's hands. During his biannual tour the sheriff heard pleas; but, as in the county court, the cases were not of major importance. Significant land cases which once were decided in the hundred court had been withdrawn. The court heard a variety of civil suits, and its juries brought in criminal indictments.\textsuperscript{50}

Shrieval judicial duties included more than service as a judge; they often dealt with what should be considered judicial-administrative work in the county court. The sheriff sent inquests to the council or the chancery. He

\textsuperscript{49}Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 116, 117; Morris, pp. 197, 198, 212. Some of the writs authorizing the sheriff to hear crown pleas were de nativo habendo, monstraverunt, de namio vetito. Although Magna Carta forbade sheriffs to hold crown pleas without a royal writ, they sometimes disregarded this injunction and heard cases belonging to the royal justices (Morris, p. 196).

\textsuperscript{50}Morris, p. 202; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 18, 70, 119, 167, 185. Ordinarily bailiffs presided over the hundred courts.
declared men outlaws in the shire court, empanelled juries, conducted inquests into alleged crimes, and administered the oath of fealty in the court.  

The judicial business of the county entailed keeping records, and here again the sheriff was assigned to preserve the transcripts. He kept counterrolls to the coroners' official reports for crown pleas, retained his own record of fines and fees resulting from civil cases, and, along with the coroner, made a report of inquests conducted before them.  

Perhaps the sheriff's judicial authority declined between the reigns of Henry II and Edward I, but it is incorrect to suggest that the sheriff had no significant part in county legal affairs. It is, likewise, dangerous to underestimate the scope of this judicial power while acting under royal writ.

Serving as the shire's chief law officer usually meant that the Edwardian sheriff kept the king's prisoners in a jail which was assigned to him for this use. Generally those incarcerated were delivered to the sheriff

52Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 115; Morris, pp. 195-96.
by his subordinates for safe-keeping while awaiting trial. During confinement prisoners were cared for by the sheriff who in turn received credit for his costs at the exchequer. In Edward's time the sheriff retained captives and hostages from both the Welsh and Scottish wars. 54

Confinement of prisoners held very little appeal for most law officers. The danger always existed that the accused might escape, in which case the sheriff would have to recapture the man or risk being fined. Very often the prisons were filled. This situation made escape easy, or it meant that the sheriff had to keep in custody men of little means from whom he could extort nothing. Because the sheriff's business took him away from the prisoners, he had to entrust them to a deputy while personally being held fully responsible for the assignees. Once again the possibility of escape and fine made the care of criminals an unwelcome and burdensome liability. 55

Since the sheriff did not usually try felons in his judicial capacity, he held them for delivery to royal judges and had to produce the accused at the proper time. Certainly the nature of the crime and condition of the prison determined whether or not the sheriff would physically hold the felon or release him on bail if the bail


55 Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 69; Morris, pp. 231-32.
could be raised. On the other hand a sheriff could release a suspect to mainpem. The sheriff had wide discretion in releasing persons, but admitting a felon to bail or someone to mainpem who had been arrested on special command created serious hazards for the sheriff; he was liable for the suspect's appearance.

Orders coming to the sheriff directed him to give some special attention to his charges. Writs which required him to release a prisoner, admit him to bail, or mainprise came from the King as did notices to help other officials conduct prisoners from one place to another, transfer on his own to a new confinement, or perhaps receive an offender into his custody. Likewise, a special writ directed sheriffs to perform an execution, which was a royal prerogative, or attend as a witness to a hanging in a private franchise. The care of prisoners indicates another facet of shrieval administrative jurisdiction. Not unlike his many other duties, it was complicated, burdensome, and costly when he made a mistake.

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56 Morris, p. 232; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 71, 73; C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 291.
57 Morris, p. 232.
58 C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 73, 80, 259, 320, 459; Morris, p. 232.
60 Morris, pp. 233-34.
Distrain of one's property and person provided a means by which the crown affected its will against violators of the law and collected obligations due it. The agent who carried out distrains was the sheriff. The causes for distrain comprised a long list, but among the more common types were: Distrain of goods of foreign merchants whose state was in conflict with England;\(^{61}\) distrain against former sheriffs who failed to complete their accounts;\(^{62}\) distrain against those amerced before the royal justices;\(^{63}\) distrain against suspect criminals;\(^{64}\) distrain against individuals who wrongfully held another's property;\(^{65}\) distrain against debtors to the crown.\(^{66}\) Having seized the property, the sheriff could sell it in order to recover the fine or debt due the king.\(^{67}\) If the sheriff carried out the process of distrain in the king's name, he sometimes

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\(^{61}\) C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 540; Morris, p. 236.

\(^{62}\) E159/48, mm. 2, 7 d.

\(^{63}\) E159/49, m. 14.


\(^{66}\) E159/48, mm. 3, 10, 11, 11 d; E159/50, m. 5; E159/57, m. 20; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 262, 288. Two examples of a sheriff entering a private liberty appear in E159/49, m. 14; E159/52, m. 15 d.

\(^{67}\) Madox, II, p. 196.
granted respite to or made return of the condemned property. Individuals received respite if they were in royal service or arranged somehow to repay the debt. In one case Bogo de Knovill, sheriff of Shropshire and Staffordshire restored seisin to heirs of land which the crown seized; other sheriffs acted similarly. In a different situation a sheriff from Shropshire had to restore property to a suspected felon, having received a royal order to do so. The frequency with which distraint proceedings appear in the treasury records is indicative of the amount of time and work spent by the sheriff and his subordinates in carrying out this type of work.

The Norman conquerors of England introduced into their newly acquired kingdom the inquest as a means for ascertaining information. The Norman vicecomes and his successors conducted inquisitions in their bailiwicks; and depending on the nature of the suit, they might have the aid of the coroner, eschaeator, or local knights. The types of inquests can be divided roughly into two categories—the civil cases such as those which involved possessory rights and obligations, perambulations and

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69 C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 125.
boundary disputes, royal rights, and private rights, and criminal cases dealing with trespass, contempt, deaths, and public disorders. Besides the above mentioned inquests which fall rather neatly into civil or criminal matters, sheriffs also were called upon to inquire into shipwreck, illegal exportation of wool, and failure to repair public works. Many of the sheriff's inquests undoubtedly were made in conjunction with his tourn or in the county court. The use of the inquisition and the sheriff's participation indicate a regular and significant service which he performed for the government.

Prior to the thirteenth century, the English sheriff exercised extensive military duties; but, as we have noted with regard to many shrieval responsibilities his powers were greatly curtailed. Royal commissions partially or completely assumed his authority to draft or mobilize the county forces. In addition the sheriff rarely commanded the militia on expeditions in the years preceding

72 Fine Roll, 1272-1307, p. 51; E159/48, m. 26; E159/49, mm. 15, 17, 18 d; E159/51, m. 11; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 269, 369, 382, 542, 548-49; C.C.R., 1279-88, pp. 64, 249; C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 267-68; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 239; Hunnisett, p. 82; Cam, "Studies," pp. 177-78; Morris, pp. 213-14.

73 C.P.R., 1279-88, p. 248; C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 239-40; C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 276; Hunnisett, p. 77.

74 C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 112, 124, 380; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 395; Hunnisett, p. 81.
Edward I's death. Considering that many military duties were consigned to commissions and special agents, the sheriff still mobilized the militia by royal writ and viewed the county force to insure its preparedness for police or military service.

Responsibility for mustering and recruiting remained within the sheriff's purview although no longer exclusively. Sheriffs during Edward's reign had to summon all those who owed knight service and during the Edwardian wars assisted commissioners of array in drafting men for the royal armies.

In the Scottish wars sheriffs, assisted by royal agents, were instructed to supply provisions to the armies. One need only examine the documents in a cursory fashion to note of this type of order directed to nearly every shire. The supplies included wheat, grain, wine, and money which were dispatched to Berwick or some specified garrison outpost. At the very end of the Edwardian wars sheriffs in

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76 Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 85, 189, 190, 216; Morris, p. 237.
77 Templeman, p. 29; Morris, pp. 235, 236, 237; Cam, Communities, p. 30; C.C.R., 1296-1303, pp. 380-1, 388-91, 395.
Southampton, Somerset, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincoln, Northumberland, and York were required to halt the exportation of food, gold, and war materials which were apparently needed for the campaign. 79 Securing provisions was not the only military duty imposed on the sheriff. Sufficient evidence exists to prove that he was charged with purveyance of the victuals to the front. 80

Again it is worth noting that the English sheriff's role in regard to one specific function was changing during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. While he continued to provide important military service for the crown, he no longer participated in fighting or commanding forces as he once did.

In the thirteenth century, some sheriffs were placed in command of castles within their respective bailiwicks; and by Edward I's time those who failed to receive the investiture found this a grievance. The castles provided a residence as well as an office for the sheriff and staff. Many castles accommodated royal

79 C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 488.

80 C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 344, 388; C.P.R., 1301-7, pp. 417-18, 430; Morris, pp. 270-1, 237. At the time of the Scottish wars the sheriffs were to prepare beacons of alarm if the Scots invaded. They were to assemble all persons with horses and arms to meet the emergency.
prisoners, and for this reason alone were important to the sheriff. 81

The obligation for the maintenance of public works, i.e., bridges, roads, and castles, was not clearly defined in medieval England. Local custom and common law established some precedence, but royal writ and judicial decree increasingly determined the performance of this requirement. The sheriff had to enforce the upkeep of public works upon those held accountable for the fulfillment of the assignment. 82

Apparently the upkeep of public works was a very old shrieval duty. It seems to have increased in scope during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, for King Edward seems to have had his sheriffs look after more projects than they previously had. He had to keep in

81 Morris, p. 186. During the thirteenth century many sheriffs were assigned castles. Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 131. Those castles not assigned to sheriffs were placed in the hands of constables who exercised independent powers. Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 66-67.

82 Morris, pp. 219, 220. Often there was no provision for the public works which were not customary. Towards the end of the century writs indicate that new works were to be undertaken at the king's authority. Thus in the city of Hereford which had come into the king's hands by 1291, letters patent required the king's administrator (in this case he was the sheriff) to appoint persons to collect the pavage, tax conceded by the crown to the city in the past. In 1301, a letter close authorized the sheriff of Oxford to induce land owners to make payments for the maintenance of the pavement; however, they could not be induced to pay the tax of their own free will, the sheriff must compel them to make it (C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 450; C.C.R., 1296-1302, p. 484).
good repair castles and their walls, bridges, highways, and buildings and the like on royal manors within his bailiwick. In order to carry out the repairs a sheriff requisitioned labor from the vicinity.

The success of the royal government to communicate with its subjects depended to no small degree upon the sheriff. The government relied upon him to read proclamations throughout the county, and thus make known the royal pleasure. Proclamations dealt with a wide divergence of subjects and included the important Charter of Forests, Charter of Liberties (these being read four times yearly), writs, declarations of peace, royal grants, and statutes. Proclamations by the sheriff were read in the county court perhaps on more than one occasion or in numerous localities throughout the shire. Regardless of how or when they were announced, it was extremely important to the crown that they were, for without shrieval proclamations most royal decrees would have remained unknown, inoperative, and ineffective.

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83 Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 105.
84 C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 277; C.C.R., 1279-88, pp. 88, 213, 505; C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 432; E159/49, m. 4 d; Morris, p. 219; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 102-3.
85 Morris, pp. 199, 217-18, 222.
The English kings, Edward I included, placed Jews under their special protection. Because of this situation the government called upon the sheriff to deal with the royal charges. The sheriff of Oxford was assigned custodian of the Jews in his bailiwick while a sheriff in Cambridge received instructions to permit a certain Jew to dwell in peace and conduct his business without interference. In other circumstances sheriffs throughout all of England were directed to go in the company of designated knights and seal chests of the Chirographers of the Jews. 87

Certain activities by the sheriff in relation to the Jews did not differ substantially from those which he would have had with any other subject. The sheriffs of Nottingham, Northampton, and Southampton seized and sold chattels and property of condemned Jews, and the sheriff of York was to render in his payments to the exchequer debts owed by Jews to the crown. 88 Although it is difficult to estimate how much business the sheriff had with the Jews, it must have been important so long as they remained in England and under the king's protection.

Within the county administrative structure there were numerous officials who although not part of the

88 E368/61, m. 37 d; C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 362, 403, 463.
sheriff's staff, participated in local government and came into contact with the sheriff through his supervision of their election and sometimes service in performance of his work. The sheriff held elections upon receipt of a writ.\(^{89}\) The writ called upon him to conduct the election of verderer of the royal forests, conservators of the peace, members of Parliament from cities, boroughs, and county, wardens to enforce laws against bad money, reguarders, representatives from cities to treat with merchants on new imposts,\(^{90}\) and coroners.\(^{91}\)

The connection between the coroner and sheriff extended into a more complex association. The English monarchy originally created the coroner to check the sheriff's power or abuse of power. The coroner was to remain independent of the shrieval influence. By the close of Henry III's reign, however, the two roles seem to have reversed themselves. This situation led to the assignment

\(^{89}\) Morris, p. 89.

\(^{90}\) C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 494; C.C.R., 1279-88, pp. 363, 516; C.C.R., 1288-96, p. 357; C.C.R., 1296-1303, pp. 315-16; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 47; Morris, pp. 199-200, 209, 214. Conservators of the peace were sometimes elected under the supervision of the sheriff. Writs, issued in 1295, ordered the sheriff to have elected citizens from each city and burgesses from each borough of the county to Parliament. The writ required that the sheriff endorse it and list those duly elected and to return the writ on a given date (Morris, p. 202).

of joint responsibility to sheriffs and coroners. Co-operative action entailed inquiries into lands and chattels of criminals, homicides, abjuration, and shipwreck. The two officials conducted elections in county court, and the coroner always accompanied the sheriff on his tour and kept records of indictments made in the hundred sessions.

At the time of their creation coroners kept records of crown pleas as a means to prevent shrieval malpractice. It is noteworthy that by the Statute of Westminster I, the sheriffs in each county were enjoined to duplicate rolls of the same cases. These counter rolls provided a system whereby itinerant justices could check the accuracy of the coroner's account if a challenge should arise.  

Although the sheriff oversaw the coroners' selection and could play a decisive part in the choices, the coroners maintained a significant voice in the sheriff's business. In the absence of a sheriff the coroners could assume his duties provided that a writ authorized this procedure. Moreover, if a sheriff for any reason failed to carry out instructions or acted illegally, the coroners could perform in his place.

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92 Hunnisett, pp. 78, 80, 81, 84, 96, 119, 123, 128, 191-92, 194.
93 Hunnisett, pp. 152, 192; Morris, pp. 199-201.
94 Morris, p. 239; Hunnisett, pp. 91, 92.
The crown relied on the coroner and sheriff, working alone and in conjunction with each other, to perform a large share of local governmental routine. The two worked closely; and because they did, the king could use each to scrutinize the other for possible negligent or unlawful acts.

A somewhat peculiar relationship developed between the sheriff and the escheator and subescheators. By the 1270's, England's kings had made a distinction between those officials who managed tenurial business and those officials who dealt with administration. At an earlier time sheriffs performed both; but the escheators, north and south of the Trent, and the subescheators in each shire, tended the feudal obligations due the king. 95

In theory the sheriff and subescheator were colleagues while the sheriff was subordinate to the escheator when called upon for his assistance. 96 During Edward I's reign, however, the relationship changed, a tendency grew whereby the king named the sheriff subescheator in his

95Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 54.

96Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 177, 199-200. The sheriff might be asked to serve a writ or use force to distress escheats, or conduct an inquest with regard to an escheat.
respective county. Cam suggests that the exchequer could exert "... more effective control" over the sheriff and thus preferred the modified assignment.

The subescheator was one of the independent county officers with whom the sheriff shared power. The office of escheator and subescheator perhaps developed as another Angevin method to reduce shrieval authority and perhaps to relieve the sheriff's burdens. Although the offices of sheriff and subescheator remained separate and not all sheriffs were commissioned escheators, there was a distinct intention to restore shrieval jurisdiction in this area. This circumstance was not dissimilar to the sheriff's contact with royal justices--he lost his independence as a royal justice but continued to play a vital part in the system.

Much of the foregoing material has categorized the sheriff's duties and obligations in relation to the central

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97 Madox, p. 175 n. u, w, "Compotus Bogonis de Knovile de Eschaetis Regis in Comitatibus Salopiae et Staffordiae, per provisionem Regis quod Vicecomites sint Eschaetores in Comitatibus suis." "Compotus Alexandri de Kirketon de exitibus Escaetarum Regis in Com' Eboraci, dum idem Alexander fuit Vicecomes in pradicto Comitatu et Escaetor, per provisionem factam per Regem quod Vicomites essent Escaetores in ballivis suis." Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 199, 202; Stat. Realm, I, 197; C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 159; Fine Roll, 1272-1307, p. 55; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 287, 294; C.C.R., 1281-92, p. 25.

government, to the local government, and to the individual in society. The various activities thus far noted are in no way comprehensive, for the sheriff constantly received orders to carry out some specific assignment which may or may not be repeated. A complete enumeration of these tasks is impossible but mentioning a few and diverse samples may provide a better understanding of the situation.

Sheriffs were called upon to serve the king's hawking and hunting, sell wood from royal forests, keep a fair, conduct negotiations with Prince Llewelyn, care for personal needs of the king—supply food and wine, allow land seized by the king from the church to be sown, set up boundary markers, receive and entertain royal guests, safeguard the king's

99 Wardrobe, pp. 75-76; Templeman, p. 16.
100 C.C.R., 1288-96, p. 518.
101 C.P.R., 1301-7, pp. 106, 156.
104 C.C.R., 1279-88, pp. 169, 309; Templeman, p. 32.
106 Cam, Communities, p. 29.
107 Morris, pp. 264-65.
treasury and records while they were in transit to York, administer and respond for cities in the king's hands.

The foregoing information provides some understanding of the vast amount of labor imposed upon a sheriff. In order to manage everything the sheriff had a personal staff, consisting of undersheriffs, clerks, bailiffs, serjeants, beadles, valets, messengers, castellians, and constables.

The chief deputy was the undersheriff who assisted the sheriff by performing shrieval duties in the sheriff's absence or in case of his inability to respond immediately in a given situation. Acting in the sheriff's capacity, he could arrest and receive prisoners, make distrains, convene the hundred court, preside over the shire court, collect taxes, execute writs, and account at the exchequer. Although it might require a writ of authorization to perform some of the above assignments, the undersheriff

108Morris, pp. 272-73.

109C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 1; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 169; "Northumberland Pipe," Vol. 38, pp. 184-86; E159/54 m. 31; E159/61, m. 49.

110Templeman, pp. 11-12; Mills, Surrey Pipe Rolls, p. vi; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 22, 54, 113; Morris, p. 190, ns. 162, 163, seems to find evidence that beadles were not the same as bailiffs but do perform some of the same functions. Beadles were sheriffs' subordinates; E368/61, mm. 49, 50; E159/51, m. 31, indicate that the sheriff retained a garcon, but the term remains impossible to define accurately, E159/51, m. 31; E159/54, m. 32, like the garcon, the valet is a difficult office to explain; Morris, pp. 191 n. 163, 230, 231; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 76, 86, 188.
could and did assume almost every shrieval obligation in spite of the fact that the sheriff retained full responsibility.111 While it is not completely substantiated, there is evidence that some undersheriffs comprised a permanent group of deputies who remained in office for some time and served a sheriff and his successor.112 As noted below, this was not uncommon for other staff members.

Perhaps of greater importance to the sheriff than his deputies were his clerks. Perhaps in some cases the sheriffs were illiterate and must have depended entirely upon their clerks in matters entailing reading or writing.113

The sheriff had a clerk or staff of clerks who handled his financial affairs. This shrieval treasurer, known as the receptor, kept the fiscal records, prepared for the accounting at the exchequer, and received money

111 Morris, pp. 179, 181, ns. 98, 99, 189, n. 148; Mills, Surrey Pipe Rolls, vii, n. 1; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 69, 133-34; E159/48, m. 20; E159/51, m. 31; Templeman, p. 12, "Ordinarily he [the sheriff] appointed his subordinates himself, but on one occasion the king made the choice. This happened in 1282 when Richard de Amundeville was named . . . to assist the sheriff of Warwickshire, Osbert de Bedford, in keeping the peace in those troubled times. For the county this kind of royal appointment was unique in the period."

112 Two men who seem to have spent their entire careers as local officials were William Hartshill and Ralph Arabicus; Templeman, pp. 13-14.

113 Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 133, 134.
paid to the sheriff.\textsuperscript{114} He also seems to have had clerks who kept the rolls of the tourn, drew up indictments for the itinerant courts, kept the rolls of the county court, received and returned writs, kept jury lists, and all conceivable records and correspondence for the sheriff.\textsuperscript{115}

Sheriffs' clerks performed a variety of assignments such as empanelling juries, making arrests, and responding for the sheriff at the exchequer.\textsuperscript{116} With the exception of the clerk who rendered accounts, who undoubtedly was the receptor, it is difficult to determine whether special clerks performed these services or whether the clerks were part of the sheriff's treasury or chancery staffs. Part of the problem stems from the fact that it is almost impossible to give a precise definition to "clerk" and because the sheriff tended to shift his subordinates from position to position.\textsuperscript{117}

The county clerks seem to be a definite class of public, professional men. It is obvious from the evidence that clerks often served more than one sheriff in the same county over an extended period. Some of them moved with

\textsuperscript{114} Morris, p. 189, ns. 151, 152; Cam, *Hundred Rolls*, p. 134; *Rot. Hund.*, i, 144; ii, 190.

\textsuperscript{115} Cam, *Hundred Rolls*, pp. 121, 134-35; Morris, pp. 189-90.

\textsuperscript{116} E159/48, mm. 20, 30; Morris, pp. 189, 190, 253.

\textsuperscript{117} Morris, p. 189, n. 150; Cam, "Studies," p. 149.
a sheriff from one county to the next or from one appointment to another. It is probable that certain families traditionally provided some of the men who staffed the sheriffs' offices. Although clerks were subordinates to the sheriff and served at his pleasure, the sheriff became very dependent upon these deputies for the record keeping and corresponding, not to mention the multifarious special assignments. In addition to this aspect, it should not be forgotten that since clerks were a permanent part of the local governmental apparatus, a new sheriff was likely to rely upon these men who knew the machinery and practices of the county government. It is not at all inconceivable that many sheriffs came under the influence of these subordinates

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118 E159/48, m. 30, lists Adam de Sandhurst as sheriff of Gloucester's clerk. Cf. Lists, p. 49, Sandhurst is a recognized sheriff's clerk in the same county over a period of years from the late 1260's to the mid 1270's. E159/51, m. 30 d, refers to John de Uptone as clerk to the sheriff of Wilts. Cf. Lists, p. 152, this same man apparently served four different sheriffs in the same county over a period of twenty years, 1261-1281. Cf. E159/48, m. 20 d and Lists, p. 78 for William de Notingham in Lincoln. E368/61, m. 49 indicates that Michael, clerk to the Earl of Cornwall, hereditary sheriff of Cornwall, also represented the earl for his holdings in Devon. Cf. Lists, p. 102 and E368/61, mm. 6, 6 d for the name Stapleford. While it is not definite that Hugh and Thomas were related, both men served sheriffs in Nottingham and Derby. Cf. E159/60, m. 10; Lists, p. 68 for Walter and Robert de Venur. Walter was a sheriff's clerk in Lincoln while Robert became sheriff in the same county.
and depended on them for the smooth operation of the county.119

Much of the day to day routine work of local government was carried on by bailiffs.120 Many served either as itinerant or hundred bailiffs.121 There is relatively little information on the appointment and tenure of bailiffs. Sheriffs nominated some, but they attained office through election, inheritance, or royal appointment, that is by the king or one of his departments. Regardless of the method of selection all had to swear to uphold and execute royal commands.122 Bailiffs performed on the local level the functions associated with the sheriff. The sheriff communicated directives to his assistants who then, on the sheriff's behalf, made arrests and distrains,

119 Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 135. Dependence upon clerks by the sheriff would be likely in those counties where a sheriff held dual appointments.

120 Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. xxii, 135-36; Morris, p. 188, "The word bailiff is a general term which includes both heads of the lesser territorial divisions of the county and staff attached directly to the sheriff's office. The Latin word serviens most literally translated as sergeant is often used as an equivalent to the title."

121 Templeman, p. 16; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 54, 136, 153. Some of the subbailiffs may, in fact, be subordinates to the hundred bailiffs rather than the sheriff (Morris, p. 190).

122 Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 145-47; Templeman, pp. 14, 15; Mills, Surrey Pipe Roll, p. vi; Morris, p. 188. A franchise bailiff might be responsible in some areas to the sheriff as well as the franchise holder (Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 54-55).
issued summonses, kept jails, farmed hundred revenues, collected debts, and viewed the frankpledge.\textsuperscript{123}

Many bailiffs formed a professional class of local administrators who often remained in one position for some years and worked with many sheriffs. There were instances in which a bailiff governed several hundreds for one man or held a similar position in several counties. A bailiff was employed by both the king and a franchise holder simultaneously. These bailiffs came from a social class of small land holders and clerks. Needless to say, they made up an indispensable part of the sheriff's staff as necessary agents in the operation of royal government.\textsuperscript{124}

The serjeanty fee was one of the major feudal tenures. It is known that possessors of this form of fief performed services to the crown, and the service could entail aid to the sheriff in numerous ways. They made arrests, kept prisons, and transported money. In one sense the serjeants performed duties for which the sheriff relied upon his staff, and perhaps serjeanty fees constituted the work of bailiffs and clerks. Nevertheless, their aid must

\textsuperscript{123} Morris, pp. 188, n. 145, 189, 190, 191; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 79, 125; Mills, Surrey Pipe Rolls, pp. vii–viii.

\textsuperscript{124} Templeman, p. 15; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 55, 149–50, 152.
have been as valuable to the sheriff as any other member of his official family. 125

Although the sheriff depended on his subordinates for assistance, he had many problems with them. Criticism was directed against these men for extortion, illegal imprisonments, bribery, collection of unauthorized fines and amercements and innumerable additional depredations against the local people. Sheriffs were either unwilling or unable to supervise their aids, consequently royal officials, usually judges, intervened to protect the king's subjects from excessive maltreatment. 126

The above discussion of the sheriff's staff is no way meant to detail all aspects of the question. It is intended, rather, to further the understanding of the sheriff and his administrative work in the county.

To summarize a summary, to say the least is redundant. Nevertheless, the reader of the information presented in this section should be impressed by the enormous and complex responsibilities subsumed in the office of the sheriff. He was the factotum of public administration. Obviously the office changed over the centuries, for the


126 Templeman, pp. 15-16; Morris, pp. 188, 191-92; Cam, Hundred Rolls, pp. 134-35.
sheriff was no longer the sole judge, administrator, military commander, tax collector, investigator, and royal agent in the county. The sheriff shared many of the functions with new officers. But in spite of the alterations and partial loss of power, the central government continued to rely on the sheriff for the effective operation of county government in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.
CHAPTER II

THE SHERIFF AS A PUBLIC SERVANT

An investigation into the office of the sheriff necessarily leads to a study of the men who held the office. Such a study must include an examination of the public and private service these men performed in order to determine the extent to which the personnel who held the office of sheriff should be considered professional administrators whether they found employment with the crown, the church, the nobility, or all three. An inquiry into the careers of the sheriffs of Norfolk, Suffolk, Northampton, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Northumberland reveals that the sheriff's career encompassed such a wide variety of duties and that this situation was so common that one must think of these men as professional administrators.

The question as to why a man entered upon a career in public and private administration is difficult to answer. As the title to White's book suggests, a certain

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1 There were joint shrievalties for Bedford and Buckingham, Oxford and Berks, Essex and Hertford, Warwick and Leicester, and Cambridge and Huntingdon.

2 See A. B. White, Local Self-Government at the King's Command (Minneapolis, 1933).
amount of governmental work was imposed on the king's subjects. Certainly many persons served on jury panels, inquisitions, and commissions. But the fact that such an individual might have some responsibility in local affairs does not explain why he might make a career out of public service. Perhaps the desire for political influence at the county level or even the influence with central government encouraged some men to seek careers in government.

After the Norman conquest, the office of sheriff was the preserve of the great feudal barons. During the thirteenth century, however, the kings replaced the great tenants in chief with men of lesser station. Despite the change in personnel, the office may have retained the social prestige attached to the nobility. In this sense political power and social status became closely associated and may have encouraged a man to seek the office of sheriff.

The prospect of becoming wealthy may have inspired some people to enter government service. Although the crown did not pay many officials a regular salary, there were financial rewards, both legal and illegal. Sheriffs and bailiffs received the money collected above that which was due the crown. Many officials resorted to extortion.

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Worcester, Lancaster, Cornwall, Chester, and Durham were controlled by great temporal or ecclesiastical lords even during Edward I's reign. Chapter III will deal with social status. Madox, Vol. II, pp. 137-39.
and other corrupt practices to augment their incomes. The faithful servant might also anticipate fiefs, wardships, and gifts from a grateful sovereign.  

The English kings may have displaced the great nobles from many offices and replaced them with new men because the nobility, engaged in their own vast interests, involved in military affairs, or concerned with the major political issues confronting the state, simply were no longer knowledgeable about county business; nor had the nobles the time to give to local affairs except as these affairs affected them directly. Those men who now assumed responsibility in the county unquestionably possessed the knowledge and interest in government to fulfill the crown's needs; and, in so doing, they could look after their own interests. Moreover, the thirteenth-century kings perhaps found it difficult to control local government so long as the tenants in chief managed it. The Angevins preferred men whom they could dominate more easily through the state's power and the rewards of office.

In addition one should not overlook the possibility that the English monarchs required an ever-increasing number of men to staff a government whose functions and

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^The great inquisition recorded in the Hundred Rolls and state trials in the middle of Edward's reign are sufficient indication that illegal and corrupt practices were flagrant despite the king's obvious disapproval.
needs multiplied daily. Because of this situation the
government had to draw upon a large source of manpower.

A question which remains difficult to answer is how
a man joined the government. How did the crown become
aware of someone and then use that person in the adminis-
tration? Certainly jury duty, tax commissions, and other
appointments of the gentry accounted for a partial explana-
tion. But one can only speculate and suggest a few addi-
tional solutions.

A prospective royal official may have entered the
king's service through feudal obligations, as a holder of
a serjeanty tenure which required him to manage a castle, a
hundred, or manor for the king. Having proved himself a
capable, loyal man, he may have been retained and promoted.
A feudal obligation could bring a family into the king's
employment generation after generation; thus families
established themselves as traditional public servants.
Also one member of a family could attain high rank in the
church and government and bring his relatives into subordi-
nate positions under his control; these subordinates could
advance into royal service because of their own talents.\(^5\)

Sheriffs came from cadet lines of the baronial
families. Perhaps through the influence of the family head
or employment as a bailiff or in the household of the lord

\(^5\)C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 172; Templeman, p. 47.
members of the cadet branch gained administrative experience and came to the attention of the king who then brought them into his service. In addition to the cadet line entering royal service through association with the main branch, anyone from the gentry, seeking to supplement his income or enter upon an administrative career, might join the staff of the great tenant in chief and then move to the king's staff. Perhaps some of the shrieval class owed feudal obligations to a lord which first brought him into the noble's administrative system. Regardless of how gentry entered royal service they obviously did, and the office of sheriff was only one among many positions they held.

In studying the thirteenth-century sheriffs and, in fact, any personnel in medieval administration, the initial problem is one of identification. When a particular name appears in more than one county, in many offices, and at many different times, does that name always belong to the same person, to a relative, or to unrelated individuals? The situation is further complicated by the lack of any standardized spelling of names. Occasionally a reference provided a clue which aided in the identification. For instance, Hamo and Roger Lestrange were brothers, or Guichard de Charron had a son by the same name who was also

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6 Templeman, pp. 44-45; Treharne, p. 3.
a sheriff. Because of the problem of identification there was some guess work and unhappily some inaccuracies in relating names to the proper office holder; and at times it was necessary to rely solely upon approximate dates, that is, if a man was active in governmental service and active in a given time span and locale, one could assume with reservations that he was the same person.7

While the sheriffs of the six counties under discussion held many offices, of the approximately 125 men examined 41 of them either were sheriffs in another county or twice in the same county.8 Several were father and son or brothers who held this commission. What was apparent by the end of Edward's reign was that the office of sheriff was becoming professionalized by repeated use of the same men who were themselves professional administrators.9

Undoubtedly some of the sheriffs who held office on several occasions in the late Henrician period represented either the king or the baronial faction. Tenure and

7Regretfully one often finds material about the families in old, secondary compilations which do not cite the information's source. The men used in the survey held the office of sheriff c. 1260-1320. The reason for including men whose tenure preceded or followed Edward's reign is that while they may have been sheriff before or after him, they may have held offices during his lifetime.

8The reform party of 1258 attempted to impose an annual term on the sheriff. This idea is found in the Provisions of Oxford. Note that the situation might violate the spirit of the Provisions of Oxford.

9Cam, Communities, pp. 33-34, 45, 48.
re-appointment may indicate the vicissitudes of the conflict between 1255 and 1267. Hervey de Stanho twice served as sheriff in Norfolk and Suffolk, once for six months in 1260-1261 and again for more than a year in 1264-1265. He may have represented one of the contesting parties and came in and out of office with his faction. A similar situation may have prevailed for John de Plessey and Robert de Nevill. Plessey held office in Northumberland during 1258-1260 and then moved to Warwick and Leicester, 9 July 1261-26 February 1262. He did not account during his second term, for he may have found it impossible or never took office. Nevill exercised shrieval duties in Northumberland for nearly ten months. After a lapse of more than four years he assumed the same responsibilities in York where apparently he had difficulty collecting revenues perhaps because of the conflict between the king and the barons.10

Most sheriffs who served in more than one county received the second appointment in a shire relatively near the first. Simon de Pateshull held office in Bedford and Buckingham and then in Northampton before returning to the original counties. At least four other sheriffs moved from one county to another nearby county. Hamo Hautyn and Philip Marmion were exceptions in that their respective moves took them to shires some distance from the one in

10Lists, pp. 49, 86, 92, 97, 144, 161; E159/48, m. 27d; E159/49, m. 2; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 104-5.
which they had had previous service. The explanation for
the translation of sheriffs may be found in the fact that
these men were particularly able and thus found regular
employment with the king, or they may have had vested
interests in several counties and were anxious for the
appointment in order to look after their holdings.

During Edward's reign and the first years following
his death at least a dozen men held the shrieval office in
several different counties. Many of these sheriffs held
office two or three years; but occasionally, as in the case
of three men, they retained jurisdiction for many years.

Just as in the preceding period sheriffs moved from
county to county in a fairly confined circle, so they did

11 Lists, pp. 1, 12, 43, 78, 86, 92, 97, 106, 161;
E159/48, mm. IIId, 28d; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 155, 388-89;
Edward Foss, The Judges of England, 8 vols. (London, 1820-
64) [Hereafter cited as Foss, III], p. 102; Fine Rolls,
1272-1307, p. 32; Templeman, pp. 10 n. 3, 48.

12 Thomas de Divelston in Northumberland, 1281-88,
William de Roinges or Rother in Norfolk and Suffolk, 1281-
89, William de Boyvill in Rutland 1272-80. We know that
during the baronial conflict an attempt was made to limit
shrieval tenure to one year in order to protect the shire
inhabitants from the oppressive sheriff. The crown may
have accepted the limitation in principle in order to
protect its subjects and royal interests by not allowing
one man to become too involved in a county. It may have
been discovered that a sheriff could not effectively serve
the crown's needs in such a short time. A sheriff could
scarcely acquaint himself with the details of office before
retiring if he retained the office for only one year.
Therefore a two or three year term may have provided the
subjects with their basic aim while providing reasonably
efficient operation of local government.
during the reign of King Edward. Nine out of the eleven sheriffs for the Edwardian period served in counties close to each other while the two remaining men represented the king in counties which were some distance from each other. All of these men may have held interests in the counties in which they served, the two latter in far flung localities; or they were, as in the case of the Henrician sheriffs, administrators sent by the crown for their abilities or because the crown needed experienced men for shrieval service.

Eight sheriffs held office in three or more counties. Of these, two, Walter Shelfhanger and Ralph de Crophill, retained their positions for relatively short terms. On the other hand two of the eight, Robert Hereward and William de Sutton, had terms of intermediate length. Hereward held office in Cambridge and Huntingdon and Norfolk and Suffolk for a total of nearly six years. At one time he attended the bishop of Ely as a seneschal with shrieval duties in the liberty; however, it is not known how long he retained this appointment. Sutton began his shrieval career in Essex and Hertford in December, 1294 and almost without interruption passed to Cambridge and Huntingdon and on to Norfolk and Suffolk where he held office until the end of 1301.

152. William de Mere, Lists, pp. 1, 117. Those whose transference indicates a more abrupt change are Refham who moved from Middlesex to Norfolk and Suffolk, and Thomas de Sancto Omero who moved from Wilts to Norfolk and Suffolk.

14Walter de Shelfhanger, Lists, pp. 12, 78, 86; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 15, 31; E159/48, m. 8d; E159/49, mm. 13, 33; E159/51, m. 3. Ralph de Crophill, Lists, pp. 102, 117. Shelfhanger held office in Norfolk and Suffolk, Cambridge, and Lincoln between December, 1273 and November 1277 while Crophill began his duties in June, 1311, in Nottingham and Derby and ended his work as sheriff in Shropshire and Staffordshire in 1316.


16Lists, pp. 12, 43, 86.
Besides those men who held shrieval positions for brief or moderate duration there were four who should be classified as professional sheriffs and not just professional government employees, that is they seem to have spent most of their public careers as sheriffs. William de Boyvill, if he is the same man, received appointments as sheriff in no less than five different counties in the years between 1270 and 1290. Although he did not always move directly from one shire to the next and may not have assumed his duties in Cumberland, Boyvill began in Norfolk and Suffolk and moved to Rutland for nearly eight years. He supposedly went to Cumberland next from which county he transferred to Bedford and Buckingham and finally to Warwick and Leicester.\(^\text{17}\) While not so spectacular an office holder as Boyvill, John de Crepping first served as sheriff of Glamorgan, Wales in 1295. He then appeared as sheriff of Durham for the bishop of the palatine county.

When the bishopric passed into the hands of the king,

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\(^{17}\) According to Lists, Boyvill was sheriff in the following counties: Norfolk and Suffolk, 5 Aug. 1270-29 Nov. 1272 (p. 86); Bedford and Buckingham, 16 Oct. 1285-Easter 1288 (p. 1); Cumberland, 14 Apr. 1282-3 May 1283 (did not account) and 3 May 1283-Easter 1284 (elected in county court but did not account) (p. 26); Rutland, Michaelmas 1272-Michaelmas 1280 (p. 112); Warwick and Leicester, Easter 1288-15 Febr. 1290 (p. 144); Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 1, 160; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 320; C.C.R., T279-88, p. 318; E159/48, m. 22d; E366/61, m. 17. Cam, Hundred Rolls, p. 62. Cam thinks it is the same person.
Crepping quickly returned to royal patronage and became sheriff of Northumberland from October, 1304 to April, 1305. Beginning in October, 1307, he became sheriff in York for eight months. 18

The remaining two professional sheriffs are John de Acton and John de Dene. Both men not only held office in more than one county, but each repeatedly occupied the sheriff's position in one county. On three separate occasions Acton was named sheriff in Hereford between 1294 and 1306. 19 John de Dene's career in Warwick and Leicester almost paralleled Acton's in Hereford. Apparently Dene was sheriff in these shires five distinct times between October, 1305 and October, 1312. 20

The factors which distinguish the above-mentioned eight men from many other sheriffs are the multiplicity of


19 According to Lists, John de Acton was sheriff in the following counties: Shropshire and Staffordshire, 18 Febr. 1304-10 Oct. 1305 (p. 117); Gloucester, 28 Apr. 1311-28 Oct. 1312 (p. 49); Hereford, 10 Dec. 1294-Oct. 1299, 16 Apr. 1303-22 Nov. 1303, 10 Oct. 1305-8 Nov. 1306 (p. 59); C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 44. Between February, 1304 and October, 1305, at which time he returned to his Hereford appointment, Acton was nominated sheriff of Shropshire and Staffordshire. After these activities, Acton re-entered the office in Gloucester for six months.

20 Lists, pp. 117, 144. During an interval in his service in Warwick Dene represented the king in Shropshire and Staffordshire. This occurred in 1305-7.
counties in which they served and for some the longer tenure. Some general conclusions, however, can be drawn from the information. With few obvious exceptions shrieval terms were relatively short, perhaps a year and a half or two years in average length. Sheriffs tended to hold office in a given locale as opposed to ranging throughout the country. A man who served in Norfolk was not likely to serve in Shropshire but was more likely to be found in the Norfolk vicinity—in Cambridge and Huntingdon or Essex and Hertford. Sheriffs may have preferred to remain in familiar surroundings where they had lands, family, and influence and where the office meant additional prestige and power. The royal government, moreover, may have willingly relied upon men with vested interests in the counties because such men knew and understood local problems and could help overcome these as trusted members of the community and royal agents.

Before leaving the topic of the sheriff, it should be noted that some families held the position over generations. For example Guichard de Charron the elder and younger were father and son who obtained the shrievalty in

21 See footnote 11 for an analysis. Also see Lists, pp. 72, 92, 97, 117 for sheriffs who held office only once.

22 An examination of all the counties in the Lists would indicate that this is more widespread than is suggested by the six counties considered in this study.
Northumberland respectively in 1267 and 1308. In 1290, one of them, probably the son, received the same appointment from the bishop of Durham. 23 Other likely father and son groups were found in the counties and over the entire period. 24 The Bassingburns from Norfolk and Suffolk do not appear to be related. 25 In addition to the father-son combination Hamo Lestrange, sheriff of Shropshire and Staffordshire, 26 had a brother Roger, who became sheriff of York. 27

Many more men, perhaps 110 of those studied, served as sheriff only once. They may have found the office too time consuming or burdensome in that sheriffs

23 Lists, p. 97; Fraser, p. 29; Knights, Vol. 80, p. 195.

24 Lists, pp. 117, 97; Knights, Vol. 80, pp. 25-27, 236; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 249; C.C.R., 1288-96, p. 22; C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 508; Charter Rolls, Vol. II, p. 419; Foss, III, p. 72; E368/61, m. 45; E159/53, m. 24; E159/54, m. 26d. Robert Corbet of Morton who was sheriff of Shropshire and Staffordshire had a son, Thomas; however, there is indication that Thomas became sheriff. For the Tittele family see Lists, p. 117; C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 343, 357; E368/61, m. 3. James and Hugh de Audeley from Shropshire, Robert and Thomas Corbet also from Shropshire, Walter and John de Cambhou from Northumberland, and William and Thomas de Tittele from Shropshire were all father and son groups.

25 For the Bassingburns see Lists, pp. 12, 92; C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 490; Knights, Vol. 80, pp. 56-57; Inquisitions, II, pp. 198-99.

26 Lists, p. 117; C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 433; C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 79; C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 66.

27 E159/48, m. 2d.
commonly left their assignment still owing the exchequer, and this debt often plagued the ex-sheriff or his heirs for years. Certainly this situation was well known and must have discouraged people from accepting the position if a way to avoid it remained open to them. Other individuals, while they became sheriffs and regularly staffed government appointments, were generally employed in another capacity and seemed to have held the shire office almost incidentally to their other work. John de Vallibus and Roger de Seyton were illustrative of this type of sheriff.

Although not a general phenomenon, five men who attained shrieval appointment had previous experience as undersheriffs. Three of them, Gilbert de Kirkeby, Simon Grenehull, and Robert de Trillec, are of particular interest. Each served not only as an undersheriff before becoming sheriff, and thus illustrate the formation of shrieval personnel in this sense, but also because each served on the staff of an important figure. This situation is an overt clue that the undersheriffs in question came from the household staff of the sheriff before entering royal service. For example, Simon de Grenehull acted as

\[\text{E159/48, mm. 11, 11d; E159/49, m. 4; E159/57, m. 4d; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 104-5, 151-52, 154, 220, 318, 319, 388-89, 439 are examples of shrieval debts.}\]

\[\text{Judges will be discussed later in this chapter.}\]
undersheriff to William Beauchamp, earl of Warwick and hereditary sheriff of Worcester.

Those men who had previous experience as deputy sheriffs must have been well trained for their job. And this would be especially true if the undersheriff actually administered the county. Because William de Beauchamp was one of the great tenants in chief and because he had many interests besides that of sheriff, he probably turned over responsibility for the shire's administration to his subordinate, Grenehull. In this way Simon de Grenehull undoubtedly was well qualified to assume similar duties on behalf of the king. 30

30 E159/48, mm. 1d, 27, 28, 29; Lists, pp. 92, 106. Gilbert de Kirkeby served as undersheriff to the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield in Oxfordshire and Berkshire before succeeding the bishop in the same county. "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 34; Lists, pp. 97, 161. Adam de Gesmuth employed John de Lythegreynes and John de Haulton as undersheriffs in the 1260's. Both deputies became sheriffs in Northumberland after Gesmuth, and both were later named to the same office in York. Haulton was deputy c. 1263 while Lythegreynes was deputy c. 1262-64. Haulton's shrieval terms are: Northumberland, 1265-67; York, 1269-70. Lythegreynes' shrieval terms are: Northumberland, 1274-78; York, 1280-8. See Lists, pp. 92, 157; E159/60, m. 3; Knights, Vol. 82, p. 215 for Grenehull. Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 216; Lists, p. 117. Robert de Trillec had an interesting career with the Mortuo Mari family prior to becoming sheriff. For nearly a year and a half he was undersheriff to Roger de Mortuo Mari in Hereford. Ten years later he held the same office under Ralph de Mortuo Mari, probably Roger's son and sheriff of Shropshire and Staffordshire. Trillec himself succeeded Ralph upon the latter's death. Trillec never re-appears in governmental service as sheriff, and it is not known whether he ever held any other office. He may have been a clerk or undersheriff, and his elevation in Shropshire may have been a
While movement from deputy sheriff to sheriff was possible and occurred, there was not sufficient evidence to uphold a thesis that this was a regular line of promotion. Men frequently had experience in many offices, of which sheriff was one. It would be valuable to determine if there were a cursus honorum in public office, but dating the various offices an individual held would be extremely difficult, especially when he held several appointments simultaneously. Nevertheless, it is our purpose to consider the shrieval careers.

One of the more important household offices used by private persons and the king was that of steward. Seven men and perhaps an eighth man who at one time held the office of sheriff served either the king or a great baron as a steward. The appointment varied from Guichard de Charron's appointment to the stewardship of the bishopric of Durham to John de Vallibus' assignment as steward of Aquitaine. 31

31 Fraser, p. 29; C.C.R., 1279-88, pp. 254, 337; C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 261, 421; Lists, p. 86; Foss, III, pp. 158, 166; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 33 is a reference to Plessy as steward of a castle; C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 356 is a reference to John Druel steward of the forest between the bridges of Oxford and Stanbridge. Besides the Charrons and Vallibus, Roger Lestrange, a
To better understand the administrative organization and the social background out of which the late thirteenth and early fourteenth-century sheriff emerged, it would be valuable to know whether or not sheriffs advanced through some ordered system of promotions and whether these men were drawn from those who owed a feudal obligation to the king such as that of manorial or hundred bailiff, or keeper of a castle. Unfortunately all we know is that sheriffs served in these capacities, but it is not possible to determine if they held these positions as an apprenticeship to becoming a sheriff or if the social and feudal status was in any way related to the manorial or hundred assignment.

Although the term "bailiff" is ambiguous and may appear without any additional reference, sometimes an explanation does exist. For example four men who attained the office of sheriff at one point in their careers were manorial bailiffs while five other sheriffs became hundred administrators.
bailiffs. On the other hand Count Amadeus of Savoy employed Richard de Harleye and Roger de Cheigny as bailiffs. In both cases, as well as in the case of John de Thorp, Harleye and Cheigny served as bailiffs before entering royal service as sheriffs in Shropshire and Staffordshire. Although it is not conclusive, there does seem to be some indication that one could rise from hundred bailiff to higher administrative positions, including sheriff. It is perhaps not just one of the ways but perhaps a major and regular means by which men were recruited into shrieval service.

32 C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 282; E159/50, m. 7d. Roger Springheuse was the king's bailiff for the manor of Straton in Shropshire; he seems to have held the office before he became sheriff. C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 189, 210. Bogo de Knovill was keeper of Ellesmere and Oswestry manor and the Castle of Oswestry. E159/50, m. 20. Robert de Norton probably was keeper of the ville of Dunwich. He seems to have owed the king money from this ville. "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 41. William de Felton held Linlithgow, but this may not be a manor. C.P.R., 1279-88, pp. 150, 201; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 106. Bogo de Knovill was bailiff for Montgomery, Kedwyy, Kery. C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 401; C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 471; Foss, III, p. 158. Roger Lestrange was bailiff for Buelt and Peak. Templeman, p. 42 n. 5. William de Boyvill farmed the hundred of Gartree. William Gifford was also a hundred bailiff, E159/49, m. 26; E159/50, mm. 6, 8; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 269, 378.

33 E368/61, m. 14d; C.P.R., 1301-7, pp. 187, 287-88, 544; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 40. Nicholas le Scot was bailiff of Newcastle.

A position which the crown filled was keeper of the royal forests. These officers looked after the king's interests and business within the parks. Robert de Balliolo became keeper of the king's forest this side of the Trent in the early 1280's, becoming sheriff at the end of the next decade. John Druel held the stewardship of Rockingham forest concurrently with part of his shrieval tenure while William de Castello became keeper of the same forest after having held the shrieval office in Warwick and Leicester, and Guichard de Charron the elder kept Richmond forest for Peter of Savoy.35

35C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 66, 74, 75; C.C.R., 1279-88, pp. 210, 259; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 185, 186; El59/57, m. 5d; Fraser, pp. 29, 34; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 35; C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 76. Guichard de Charron and Malcom de Harlye received custody of the bishopric of Durham in 1283. Guichard's selection seemed obvious; for he had previously held royal appointments, and when named custodian, he was the bishop's steward. Charron had in the past assumed custodianship over the abbey of Groynvall. Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 340, 397, 451; C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 540; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 32; Cam, Communities, p. 47. William de Sutton and Robert Hereward were sheriffs at the time they received custody of religious institutions. Sutton took possession of Mereseye priory while sheriff of Essex and the bishopric of Ely while sheriff of Cambridge and Huntingdon. Hereward at one time was seneschal for the bishopric of Durham. At a later date, while sheriff of Cambridge and Huntingdon, Hereward assumed jurisdiction over the vacant see of Ely. C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 301; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 252-53. William de Redham may have been sheriff at the time he became custodian of the bishopric of Norwich. C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 480, 486; C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 4; "Sheriff of Northumberland," p. 36; Foss, III, p. 124. Lythegreynes was escheator this side of the Trent. C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 368; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 485-86; Cam, Communities, p. 40. Knights, Vol. 83, pp. 116-17. Richard de Reifham became custodian of
When a bishop or abbot died or was translated and the office fell vacant, the king took possession of the temporalities until a successor was selected and properly installed. During the vacancy the king named custodians to administer the fiefs. Men who were or became sheriffs assumed ecclesiastical guardianships for the king, and all were men who regularly represented the king in governmental service. Since sheriffs frequently acted as sub-escheators in their respective counties and since most of the references herein mentioned indicate that the men who secured administration of vacant ecclesiastical holdings were at the time of their appointment sheriffs, it is reasonable to conclude that the king called upon his sheriffs in their capacities as sub-escheators to take charge of the temporalities. Exceptions to this do not detract from the general conclusion. Malcom de Harley, co-administrator with Guichard de Charron for Durham, was one of the king's chief escheators, and John de Lythegreynes was escheator beyond the Trent when the king assigned him the vacated archbishopric of York. In the former case there was no royal sheriff in the county. In the latter situation the

the bishopric of London in the last months of shrieval term in Norfolk and Suffolk or shortly after leaving the office. Fine Rolls, 1307-19, p. 334. Hugh de Audeley took jurisdiction over some of the bishop of Hereford's lands during the vacancy in that see.

36 See above, footnote 35, for reference to Lythegreyens. Also see below for discussion about the escheator.
king perhaps assigned the chief escheator in the region because the sheriff was not also the sub-escheator.

Just as in the cases of religious institutions, the English kings resumed jurisdiction over their cities. Generally this occurred if a city or borough failed to meet its financial obligations to the king or violated its charter. In circumstances in which the city returned to the king's direct authority, he named custodians who governed the corporation in the monarch's name and during royal pleasure. Of the sheriffs studied six became municipal custodians; this factor may explain their selection. For only one of them, John le Bretan, who ruled London on behalf of King Edward for many years, lacked shrieval experience at the time of his custodianship of London. With one exception all of the others also assumed guardianship over a municipality in the county in which they had served but not while they were sheriffs.  

37 Adam de Gesemuth and later Nicholas le Scot, both former sheriffs of Northumberland were keepers of Newcastle-upon-Tyne while Hervey de Stanho and William Redham, some eighteen years apart, had guardianship over Norwich. John de Lythegreynes, on the other hand, took custody of York during his term as the county's sheriff. "Sheriffs of Northumberland," pp. 33-34, 41; C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 11, 14; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 330; C.P.R., T281-92, pp. 41, 312; C.P.R., T292-1301, pp. 21, 245; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 5, 256, 324; E368/61, mm. 14, 43, 44; Foss, III, p. 61. There is the possibility that John le Breton the sheriff and custodian of London are not the same person.
king again relied upon trained administrative personnel to carry out his work.

Not all castles within a county came under shrieval control; this was particularly true of those on the frontiers. The king generally assigned a castle keeper who perhaps had jurisdiction over the actual structure and in addition held whatever lands were attached to the castle. Usually the keeper held the castle at royal pleasure and at ferm. More than a dozen sheriffs held castles independently of any shrieval assignment and as a separate and distinct office. 38

The terms constable of a castle and custodian may be synonyms. But the constable may have had charge of the actual building whereas the custodian held the castle and appertainances under a grant. At any rate, if there were a

38 C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 151. William de Boyvill held Carlisle at ferm. C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 315; C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 49, 104, 223; E368/61, m. 6. Bogo de Knowill was the keeper of Montgomery Castle and Oswestry Castle. Roger Lestrange succeeded him at Oswestry and the lands of Mecheyn Issiath. Prior to Lestrange's assumption of Oswestry he was keeper of Peck Castle. C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 283, 285; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 50, 70, 76. Rovert de Nevill received several castles. He held Bamburg with its demense lands and town, Devizes Castle, York Castle, Scarborough Castle, and Pickering Castle with its manor. For Walter de Cambhou see C.C.R., 1288-96, p. 268; E159/60, m. 2; E368/61, m. 49; Northumberland Pipe, Vol. 36, pp. 182-83. (Note that Cambhou held Bamburg at ferm while Gubiun held ferm of the castle and appertainances.) For Hugh de Audeley see Fine Rolls, 1307-19, p. 337. For other keepers see Templeman, p. 44; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," pp. 35-37, 41; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 317; C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 356.
distinction, sometimes the offices were combined as in the case of Bogo de Knovill. On the other hand the office of constable might remain distinct, and five one time sheriffs held this office.

In the previous chapter we noted that during Edward I's reign many sheriffs held the appointment of subescheator simultaneously with that of sheriff. The situation did not prevail in all counties, for the crown retained the separation between the office dealing with tenurial rights and general administration. Simon Grenehull became subescheator in Northampton, before he attained the shrieval office in that county. Robert de Hampton, having served

39 C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 223; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 85; C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 301; E368/61, m. 6d; C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 104, 105, 161, 185, 222, 374, 410; Inquisitions, II, p. 461.

40 Robert de Insula, William de Felton, Ralph de Shirle, Guichard de Charron, and Walter de Cambhou were constables but apparently not keepers of their respective castles. C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 25; C.C.R., 1296-1303, pp. 208-9, 425; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," pp. 35, 40. For custodians of their lands see the following: C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 169, "Appointment of William de Boyvill to custody, during pleasure, of the maritime parts of the county of Suffolk, to hold the said custody in the manner lately set forth . . . with power to compel all persons to assist in the defense." "Sheriffs of Northumberland," pp. 33-34; C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 288, William de Felton was keeper of the lands of Thomas de Soules of Scotland, the king's enemy and rebel.


42 Inquisitions, II, p. 314.
as Northumberland's sheriff and while sheriff in Cumberland, was designated escheator in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancaster. No information explained the unusual assignment. His knowledge and ability to handle the escheator's role or for some reason the unwillingness of the king to confer the additional responsibility on the sheriffs of Westmoreland and Lancaster may provide an answer to the question.

The king nominated two former sheriffs as chief escheators. John de Lythegreynes assumed the office for this side of the Trent and beyond the Trent on separate occasions. William de Boyvill, like Lythegreynes, a long time career officer, also served beyond the Trent.

Rarely during Edward's reign did anyone who was not an incumbent sheriff become a subescheator although the two positions were not necessarily bound together. This seems to support the contention in the first chapter that, in fact, the duties of sheriff were not necessarily

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44 England was divided into two divisions for the purpose of administering the king's tenurial rights, one this side of the Trent, and one on the other side of the Trent. An escheator had charge of each section. For John de Lythegreynes see C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 425, 433, 470, 474, 478, 486, 496; C.C.R., 1296-1303, pp. 472, 708; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 29; C.P.R., T292-1301, p. 140; Fine Rolls, T272-1307, pp. 357, 411. For William de Boyvill see C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 47, 57, 83, 91; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 15, 21; E159/53, m. 19d.
diminished. The two major escheators seem to be a higher station than sheriff and an office conferred on one who had attained status in governmental work.

From the late Henrician period to the late Edwardian period five sheriffs from the six counties received summonses to attend the king's council. There is no reference which would indicate that the individual was invited to the council because of his shrieval position; rather, it was more likely that the summonses resulted from the person being a tenant in chief or a major official of the state.  

Although the records for parliamentary membership are not complete for the late period of Henry III and early years of Edward I, nearly thirty sheriffs represented either counties or boroughs in parliament. Of those who took seats in parliament once during their career, fourteen represented the shire in which they served as sheriff at one time.  

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exception. 47 John de Kirkeby, Thomas de Ardene, and Nicholas le Scot represented either cities or boroughs; 48 Robert de Balliolo who sat for York and Almaricus de Nodeiis who held a seat from Buckingham had not served as sheriff in these respective counties. 49 Of those remaining, eight members of parliament attended more than one parliament, and four represented more than one shire. 50


47 "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 36; C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 163. Lythegreynes may not have been an elected member, for according to Knights, Vol. 82, p. 51, he was summoned with the royal judges in 1295.


50 Parl. Returns, pp. 12, 13, 25; C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 447. John de Dene presented himself in parliament for Huntingdon in 1299-1300, 1300-1301 and for Shropshire in 1305-7. John de Dene was sheriff in Shropshire and Staffordshire but not in Huntingdon. Foss, III, p. 158. There is no reference to Roger Lestrange in Parl. Returns; perhaps this was a personal summons either because he owed it as a vassal or because of some office he held. Parl. Returns, pp. 12, 13, 19, 22, 25; "Sheriffs of Northumber- land," p. 40. Richard de Harley, twice sheriff of Northumberland, was chosen to sit for Northumberland and Shropshire. Apparently he was elected to the 1299-1300
The men chosen to sit in parliament were elected possibly because of their knowledge about county affairs, not only because they had been sheriffs but also because of their other assignments. Those whose names appear from the six counties who were sheriffs are by no means the only persons selected. On the other hand a sufficient number was chosen to lend substantiation to the belief that the county electorate sent some experienced public servants undoubtedly because of their knowledge in local affairs; and, because of their previous contact with the royal government, they would have a greater influence with the king and his officials.

The Angevin kings created the position of coroner to assume certain shrieveal functions and to check upon the abuse of shrieveal powers. Surprisingly by the end of the thirteenth century the crown did not draw upon this class of trained county personnel to fill the ranks of the session from both shires. Among those men considered in this study John de Acton's parliamentary activity paralleled Harley's. Acton represented Hereford and Gloucester in three different parliaments, and Acton seemingly held a seat from each county simultaneously. Acton was sheriff in Gloucester, Shropshire and Staffordshire, and Hereford. Parl. Returns, pp. 17, 19, 22, 25, 31. John de Seyton, John Lestrange of Ercol, William de Sutton, and John de Cambhou all had multiple terms in parliament. Seyton represented Rutland and Northampton, Sutton sat for the borough of Warwick. The other two occupied seats from counties in which they had served as sheriffs, Cambhou sitting while an incumbent sheriff. Cambhou must have been a popular, competent sheriff or important politically in the county to represent the shire while sheriff.
With the possible exception of John de Dene in Gloucester, this did not occur for the counties studied; for only two cases suggested advancement from coroner to sheriff. Neither man filled the office in any of the six counties in this study, and both promotions date from the mid-thirteenth century.\footnote{C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 287; Gam, Communities, pp. 37-38, 39; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," pp. 33-34, 41; C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 301. The last reference is to the appointment of Bogo de Knovill "... to the custody of the peace, especially during the king's absence from the realm, in the counties of Salop, Stafford, Hereford, and Worcester." Knovill's appointment is an extraordinary office. Also see "Sheriffs of Northumberland," pp. 41-42 for William Rydel who was sheriff and conservator at the same time.}

The fact that coroners did not readily move up to sheriff does not mean that sheriffs lacked experience in lesser county appointments. Conservators of the peace, a position established during the baronial conflict, remained an important county law enforcement officer for many years. Certainly five and possibly seven men who held shrieval appointments in the six counties served as conservators of the peace. With the exception of one man from Norfolk all the others came from Northumberland, and they served as conservators in the period from the late years of Henry III to the early years of Edward II.\footnote{The reason for commercial regulations must have been military necessity. C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 330, 432; C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 488; C.C.R., 1296-1303, pp. 104, 107, 108, 317; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 38.}
Conservators of the peace were more likely to become sheriffs than coroners but not so likely as an undersheriff. Perhaps the crown preferred men with law enforcement training, but this would not have eliminated the coroner. On the other hand, those chosen coroners might not have sufficient social status to advance to the higher county office.

When Edward attempted to halt the exportation of wool, gold, armour, corn, and horses at the end of the century, he called upon his shrieval class to assist him in the execution of the policy. Six of those sheriffs whom we have investigated attempted to enforce the king's decree. All but one, Simon Grenehull, executed their commission in the county in which the person had served as sheriff.

Besides arresting wool in time of crisis, the king appointed coast guards. Giles de Mounpinzoun, before he became sheriff, helped to protect the coast. Roger de Colevill was constable of the coast for part of Suffolk, and he also kept arms for defense of the region in addition to guarding the area. 53

It is a little surprising to discover that the king selected from his shrieval appointees at least ten men to undertake foreign missions. The range of foreign

assignment is broad. Two men went to Scotland to deal with executors of the late Scotish king's will while three other men travelled to Rome on the king's business. Another group dealt with the king's affairs in Gascony, but we know only that Robert fitz John conducted an inquiry in Gascony. John de Crepping was on the king's service in Flanders; this may have been a military obligation, as undoubtedly were many more about whom foreign service is mentioned but not explained.

Although foreign service was not common except as a military obligation, it did exist. Those in Gascony probably had a role in the administration of the region, a task to which their governmental activity in England prepared them. The fact that four men who at one time were sheriffs visited Rome for the king is surprising. Possibly

54C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 328. In 1289 Guichard de Charron and Thomas de Normanvill travelled to Scotland to inquire about debts owed by the late king of Scotland to certain Gascon merchants. C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 46; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 447; C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 423, 513, 580, 587; Cam, Communities, pp. 45-46. Thomas St. Omer, Roger Lestrange, Richard de Belhus, and Thomas de Wale represented the king at Rome.

55C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 140, 315; C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 266, 277; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 243. John de Vallibus, John Lestrange, and John de Thorp were sent to Gascony. Vallibus may have been the king's seneshal in Gascony but this is unclear.

56C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 236; C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 262, 290. John de Crepping went to Ireland on the business of Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester. In many instances the foreign service must have been a military obligation.
these men were royal clerks and had a broader training than noted in this study.

The conquest of Wales by Edward I necessitated the extension of English administration to the newly acquired regions. To staff this system, it was not unnatural that the king should draw upon a body of trained personnel for the work. Most of the officials sent to Wales came from the border counties where they had already worked for the king as part of the professional administrative class. Five of Edward's shrieval appointees from this study found service in Wales. The most active among them was Bogo de Knovill, formerly sheriff of Shropshire and Staffordshire. As part of his assignment he held the counties of Carmathen and Cardigan and the castles of the same names; he also governed Lampada, Dejenor, Carakenny, and Landeney castles and their lands. Knovill attained a high distinction when Edward appointed him justice of West Wales and justice of South Wales. (Edward divided the principality into several large districts over which a justice presided. The shires constituted subdivisions of the district.) In addition to Knovill's assignments the others held commissions of array, commissions to receive Welshmen into the king's

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peace, oyer and terminer, justice and sheriff. The obvious conclusion about the Welsh administration is one that has already been drawn so often--the king relied upon trusted servants to run his government. Although not all those mentioned had become sheriffs when they took positions in Wales, all eventually attained the rank.

Because the Jews came under the king's special protection, he designated officials to deal with them. According to Chancery records, William Gerberg and Hamo Hauteyn attended the king in this business. Gerberg received goods of Jews for which he had to account at the exchequer. Hauteyn investigated their dealings with foreign merchants with regard to false and clipped money. Both men inquired into the chests of the chirographers of the Jews.

Since the days of the Norman conquest English kings called upon their subjects to render service for the

58 Roger Lestrange received Welshmen into the king's peace. (C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 219.) Robert de Grendon became sheriff of Glamorgan and participated on array commissions in Wales. (C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 326; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 556-57; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 505.) Robert Corbet and Hugh de Audeley executed oyer and terminer commissions in Wales, and Audeley served as justice for North Wales. (C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 405; C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 544; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 385.)

59 C.C.R., 1279-88, pp. 146, 256; C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 337, 473; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 56. Hamo Hauteyn was justice of the Jews.

60 C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 263, 352; C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 6, 458, 459.
government. Usually this duty involved sitting on commissions to conduct inquiries, render justice, or levy taxes. Those who took part on these panels represented the community and served the king. Many who held the office of sheriff participated on the commissions sometime during their careers.

Numerous commissions operated in the process of tax levying and collecting throughout Edward's long reign, for the king had constant recourse to special assessments in order to meet the growing costs of government. The names of the commission members are by now familiar, for they have appeared again and again; and although they do not always work in the county or counties in which they served as sheriff, they frequently did. Besides these assessors some of the same persons as well as others helped to levy

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61 For Hamo Hauteyn see C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 251; Foss, III, p. 102. For Robert de Nevill see C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 287. For Roger Springhose see C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 251. For Walter Shelfanger see E159/53, m. 2d. For Walter de Grauncourt see C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 544. For John de Seyton see C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 103-4. For Ralph de Shirely see C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 13, 105. For William de Kerdeston see C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 103-4. For Humphrey de Bassingburn see C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 103-4. For Luke Tailboys see C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 611-12; C.P.R., 1301-7, pp. 15-16. For John de Acton see C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 611-12; C.P.R., 1301-7, pp. 16, 56. For John le Breton see C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 611, 613; C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 17. For John de Dene see C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 611-12; C.P.R., 1301-7, pp. 15-16, 470. For John de Wyleby see C.P.R., 1301-7, pp. 15-16. For John de Thorp see C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 456. For Giles de Mounpinzoun see C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 456.
or collect subsidies, tallages, and feudal aids. If, as Mitchell suggests, the tax assessors and collectors were local people drawn into governmental work; then, it seems that many sheriffs although local gentry became professional administrators for the crown.

King Edward I is recognized as one of England's greatest rulers. This deserved reputation is based equally upon his domestic rule and upon his military conquests. During the first half of the reign Edward completed the annexation of Wales. In the second half of his reign the king constantly found himself engaged against the Scots. The Scottish campaigns required large supplies of food, materials, and fighting men. To accomplish the task of supplying his armies, he called upon his sheriffs who were assisted by special commissions which had to acquire and

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63 Mitchell, p. 7. "Before the death of Henry III the county assessors were mostly local landholders who were appointed by the central government to administer many public functions, taxation being only one of their duties."
purvey the goods to the war zone. The king turned to his experienced staff and to men who were either from the region or had served there, for he wanted individuals who knew the counties and could induce the local populace to co-operate with the king in his war effort.

While it is apparent that the king required supplies for his designs against the Scots, it is equally true that he needed soldiers, knights, footmen, and bowmen. In the years between 1297 and 1306, Edward appointed innumerable commissions of array and sent them into the counties to recruit fighting men. The commissions sometimes aided the sheriff in drafting soldiers, but just as often they acted without the sheriff. Many of those men whose public careers we have examined in this study served on the

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64 Between 1297 and 1300, John de Shefield, a chancery clerk and future sheriff of Northumberland, assisted in the gathering and transporting of food stuffs in Lincoln and York. (C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 314, 344, 388, 487.) About 1303, Robert Hereward and William de Kerdeston were dispatched to Cambridge and Huntingdon and Norfolk and Suffolk respectively. Both, former sheriffs in these counties, were to aid the incumbent sheriff solicit grain from religious houses. Kerdeston returned to Norfolk and Suffolk for the same purpose in 1306. (C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 68; Cam, Communities, p. 47; C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 418.) Other names are: Giles de Mounpinzoun (C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 418); John de Thorp (C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 159); John le Breton (C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 159); John de Kirkeby (C.C.R., 1296-1303, p. 574).
commissions of array and generally in the counties in which they have or will have held shrieval office.65

The Normans brought the jury and inquisition from France, and these institutions subsequently became important in England's constitutional development. They provided the king with a variety of information and brought into the government the king's subjects who sat on the inquisitions and thus joined in and gained a knowledge about the king's affairs. Three sheriffs from this study appeared on what the documents described as juries, but more than twenty others sat on inquisitions. It should

66 See A. B. White.

67 Those names which are listed on juries are Guichard de Charron (C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 136), Richard de Harely (C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 601), Bogo de Knovill (C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 345). "In a like manner [to a jury] Guichard de Charron and William de Northburg are appointed to the following counties: Nottingham, Derby, Lancaster, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Northumberland, York, and Lincoln."

be noted that the men who served on investigatory commissions represented only a small fraction of those whom the king recruited for his inquests; Edward relied heavily upon his professional administrators for the important commissions.

In the preceding chapter it was discovered that although the sheriff lost much of the independent judicial authority he once had, he continued, nevertheless, to render important service to the king's judicial system. In addition to acting as an officer of the royal courts, the sheriff never entirely gave up his ancient judicial privileges; and he sat as a royal judge when designated to do this by the king's writ. Apart from the sheriff's judicial function, those subjects who attained the rank of

Northumberland," p. 33 (John de Plessey). C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 274 (Luke Tailboys). E368/61, m. 15 (Walter de Upton). C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 140 (Robert de Colevill). The variety of subject matter covered by royal inquisitions is immense; nevertheless, it is worth noting a few types. Walter de Cambhou participated in an inquisition dealing with debts claimed by Gascon merchants. Another inquest considered the problem of "evil doers" who committed depredations against the country side. Guichard de Charron participated on three separate inquests: One determined certain rights of the Scotch king; another considered violations against the prohibition on the exportation of wool; the third dealt with seissin in York. An increasingly popular inquest for the crown's use was quo warranto. While this is not an exhaustive list, it should provide an idea about the varied uses to which the king employed the inquest. C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 48, 69; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 329; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 504; C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 280; Foss, III, p. 124.
shef often served in the royal judiciary independently of any relationship to shrieval duties.

One of the special judicial commissions which came into being in the thirteenth century was that of gaol delivery. Appointees of the crown, either royal justices or local gentry, received writs directing them to relieve a designated prison of its inmates in order to expedite justice and to alleviate the overcrowded and inadequate conditions. Although it would be impossible to suggest a complete list from among the names of those who executed gaol delivery writs, it is apparent that the king's subjects found themselves in the judiciary as well as the administration of England and that gaol delivery courts were one of the more common writs executed by his former sheriffs. 69

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69 Although the evidence is neither clear nor conclusive, it is possible that justices of gaol delivery collected a number of the writs and then proceeded to execute them within a short period. A. B. White, pp. 37-38.

70 Hamo Hauteyn, once sheriff of Norfolk and Lincoln, delivered jails in the vicinity of London, at Newgate and the Tower of London. C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 169; C.C.R., 1288-96, p. 335; C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 236, 474; C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 58, 159, 257; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 224. John le Breton while keeper of the city of London delivered jails in the city and the neighboring area. During his assignment in London he also held gaol delivery commissions in Norwich and in Hertford and Essex. (C.C.R., 1281-92, pp. 279, 281, 284, 304, 521; C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 25, 238; C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 41; C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 361, 394.) Guichard de Charron the elder and younger held gaol delivery for Newcastle prison as did both Walter and John de Cambhou. In the latter four cases the men served
Throughout medieval English history the forests remained the king's preserve. Just as the king had special officials to govern the forests, so he also had separate courts for them. While none of the four men who became forest justices held simultaneously that position and the office of sheriff, some sheriffs nevertheless, during their careers, became judges of the forests. Although relatively few of the sheriffs from Norfolk and Suffolk, Northampton, Northumberland, and Shropshire and Staffordshire received judicial commissions for the forests, this

was another appointment open to them and part of the career in governmental employment.\textsuperscript{71}

The crown maintained the Jews in a distinct relationship to the government. Special officials were appointed to look after the affairs of the Jewish community. Hamo Hauteyn, already noted as a sheriff and justice of gaol delivery, served as justice of the Jews for many years in the 1270's and 1280's.\textsuperscript{72}

One of the important judicial writs used in the English legal system was the writ of assize. According to this commission justices heard cases involving darrein presentment, novel desesseisin, and mort d'ancestor.

\textsuperscript{71}Robert de Nevill who was sheriff in Northumberland and York held the office of justice of the forests beyond the Trent. Apparently under a different commission he was justice for the forests in Cumberland, York, Lancaster, and Northumberland. (E159/50, m. 8; C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 419; C.C.R., 1288-96, p. 208; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 32.) The king entrusted the then well-known royal aid, Roger Lestrange the forest judgeship this side of the Trent. Besides this commission he sat on the eyre court for the forests of Derby, Huntingdon, Northampton, and Essex. (C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 84, 187, 243, 250; C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 19, 41, 147, 169, 183, 187, 257, 291.) John de Lythegeynes was associated briefly with Ranulph Dakre, justice for Pickering forest. (C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 33.) Thomas Corbet was lieutenant of the justice of the forest this side of the Trent in Shropshire. Corbet became sheriff in the county at a later date. The lieutenantship was an office held in Corbet's early career. (Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 296.)

\textsuperscript{72}Foss, III, p. 102; E159/57, m. 9d; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 6, 166, 167; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 82; C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 168, 304; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 190. Adam de Greynvill occupied the same judicial post in the last years of Henry III's reign. Charter Rolls, Vol. II, pp. 8, 9, 10, 122.
Henry III generally assigned local people to participate on the assize commissions, and he and his successor appointed judges from those known to the crown through governmental service. Four of Edward's sheriffs executed assize commissions sometime during their careers,\(^{73}\) and another, John de Crepping heard assize suits for the bishop of Durham in Durham county.\(^{74}\)

The Court of the King's Bench, one of the three central common law courts, heard pleas of the crown before the king and his justices. Master Roger de Seyton who served for nearly two years as sheriff of Northampton was a justice of the bench, and the only sheriff from the six counties to attain such a high judicial distinction.\(^{75}\)

Directly beneath the central courts in importance and comprehensiveness of duty came the eyre courts. The nature of this itinerant court when it travelled through a group of counties varied according to the commission, but generally it exercised broad powers which included not only


\(^{74}\)Fraser, p. 35.

\(^{75}\)C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 145, 153, 260-61; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 433; C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 550; C.C.R., 1288-96, p. 363. Roger de Seyton was not unique for his shrieval and judicial roles, for Martin de Littelbyry was justice of the bench and sheriff of Cumberland during his career. (C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 240.) None of the sheriffs who held judicial appointments sat on the common pleas court except when justices on eyre.
the transference to it of all judicial business pending in the shire courts but also the investigation of malpractices by royal officers, the king's financial rights, and crimes committed against the crown. Nearly 300 eyres carried on the king's judicial business throughout England from their inception in the twelfth century until the close of Henry III's reign, and Edward continued to use them extensively.

To staff the eyre courts, the king drew upon a large number of judges, clergy, barons, knights and royal officials. Among these officials ten of the shrieval class from Shropshire and Staffordshire, Northampton, Northumberland, and Norfolk and Suffolk held eyre commissions from the king. Medieval governments did not make a clear cut

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76 Foss, III, p. 4.

77 For Master Roger de Seyton see C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 16, 30, 46, 52, 98, 131, 297, 333, 465, 484, 566-67; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 1; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 67; C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 6, 63, 131. For John de Vallibus see C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 504, 546; C.C.R., 417, 436, 466; C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 87, 339; Foss, III, p. 37; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 130, 216; E159/54, m. 5; Northumberland Pipe, Vol. 36, pp. 283, 274-75; C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 277, 364, 373, 423; C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 403. Whereas Roger de Seyton's circuit is concentrated in the south-central and east, Vallibus generally conducted eyres in central and northern England. The counties in which he held eyres are as follows: Northampton, York, Lincoln, Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Leicester, Warwick, Bedford, Gloucester, Buckingham, Cambridge, and Rutland. For Guichard de Charron see C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 8. For Walter de Cambhou see C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 309, 339. For Robert de Nevill see Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 44. For Roger Lestrange see Inquisitions, II, p. 479. For John de Lythegreyenes see C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 485, 507; C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 4, 38, 389; "Sheriffs of Northumberland,"
distinction between judicial and administrative personnel. Thus men passed easily from one to another and back again. Perhaps these ten, having established their reliability as royal agents and competency in a variety of positions attained high places in the judiciary.

More comprehensive than gaol delivery commissions but not as broad in scope as the commission of general eyre was the commission of oyer and terminer. According to this writ judges on circuit heard criminal and civil actions brought into the royal courts. In the execution of the oyer and terminer the king again drew upon his trained staff of public servants, and it was found that many incumbent sheriffs held this commission. Forty-five of the sheriffs in Norfolk and Suffolk, Northampton, Shropshire and Stafford, and Northumberland held one or more oyer and terminer writs; however, one could not always determine whether those who held multiple commissions received each one and went immediately to execute it, or whether the judge collected a number of writs, including oyer and terminer and then proceeded on circuit with all of them. 78

p. 36. For Hamo Hauteyn see C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 286, 309; Foss, III, p. 38.

78 For Guichard de Charron senior and junior see C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 71, 109, 111; C.P.R., 1301-7, pp. 273, 278, 280, 476. For John le Breton see C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 108, 159, 164, 211, 467, 469, 470. Note that Breton executed many of his commissions while keeper of the City
In an examination of the various judicial commissions it became apparent that only under rare circumstances did a sheriff exercise a commission along with his shrieval assignment. The chief exception to this is the oyer and terminer writ, for eight men heard cases under oyer and terminer while sheriff. The obvious reason behind the selection of sheriffs for oyer and terminer cases was their experience and knowledge in county affairs. This would hold true for those men who received the appoint after shrieval service. It was primarily through the oyer and terminer commissions that the English sheriff retained a vital and active role in the county's judicial business on behalf of the crown and the suitors to the county court.

of London. For John de Lythegreynes see C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 46, 81; C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 130, 469. For Bogo de Knovill see C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 353, 396, 513. For Hamo Hauteyn see C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 47, 100, 144. For Nicholas de Segrave see C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 140. For Robert Knut see "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 37. For Thomas de St. Omer see C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 109, 463, 474. The above names represent only a selected group from among those sheriffs who at one time executed oyer and terminer commissions.

Regardless of how the gentry became part of the civil service, they formed an important source for the governmental personnel who not only served well but were often men of wealth which meant that the crown could attach their lands for misconduct or failure to fulfill the obligations of office. These people as individuals lacked the power to resist the crown, and they were apparently anxious to serve the king for the rewards and benefits derived from public office. But as a group with wealth, social status, and control over local government they were extremely powerful and important.  

The number of administrative and judicial positions held by sheriffs sustains the claim that sheriffs constituted a recognizable group of professional public servants. Certainly not all the sheriffs in the six counties

hustings for the City of London while Bogo de Knovill and Roger de Seyton participated in hearings on an unidentified court in London (C.P.R., 1272-79, pp. 291, 407, 467; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 308; C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 49). Roger de Seyton sat on the Court of the Exchequer, and William de Caverswell and James de Audeley became justices of Chester (C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 463-64; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 308; Charter Rolls, vol. ii, p. 311). John le Breton heard cases in Norfolk between local merchants and Norwegian merchants, and Guichard de Charron came to Northumberland to hear appeals (C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 183; C.C.R., 1302-7, pp. 379, 439). A number of others served on commissions sent into the counties to determine violations of Magna Carta and the Charter of Forests (C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 515-17).

80 Cam, Communities, pp. 35-36.
participated equally or as regularly as others. Although the process for entering royal is not clear, the choices made by the king's officers to fill governmental assignments was not accidental. The king drew upon a trained staff of men to carry on the functions of government in England.\(^{82}\)

\(^{81}\)Some of the names which recurred most often are Bogo de Knovill, Roger Lestrange, William de Boyvill, John de Lythegreynes, Guichard de Charron, the elder and younger, William de Sutton, John de Vallibus, John le Breton, John de Crepping, Robert Hereward, Robert de Nevill, Hamo Hauteyn, Roger de Seyton, Walter de Cambhou, and John de Cambhou.

\(^{82}\)Treharne, pp. 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12.
The social status of the sheriff and his role in government came to be linked closely during the thirteenth century. The early Angevins gradually, though never completely, removed the great tenants in chief from the office of sheriff and substituted in their place the local gentry, often men of knightly rank who had obtained administrative experience in the management of their own lands, the lands and interests of the barons, and the royal service. The Provisions of Oxford attempted to define the class and its role in the government. In a sense this amounted to a confirmation of an existing situation; for according to the document, the sheriffs should be men of substantial wealth who possessed lands in the county in which they served. Those who drew up the Provisions of Oxford did not intend to restore the great nobles to the shrieval office but intended to insure that the sheriffs should not be dependent totally upon royal favors and that they should have
some interest and understanding in county affairs in order to serve the people of the shire adequately.\(^1\)

Treharne\(^2\) expounded a thesis in regard to the relationship between the social status of the knights and office holding, part of which we can substantiate in the study of the sheriffs in Norfolk, Suffolk, Northumberland, Shropshire, and Staffordshire. Treharne contended that the knights, the country gentry, were essentially a new class

\(^1\)"Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 15; Cam, Communities, p. 35; Carl Stephenson, F. G. Marcham, Sources of English Constitutional History (New York, 1937) [Hereafter cited as Stephenson and Marcham], p. 145 records part of the Provisions of Oxford. "Concerning the sheriffs:--As sheriffs there shall be appointed loyal persons, good men who are landholders; so that in each county there shall be as sheriff a feudal tenant of the same county, who shall well, loyally, and justly treat the people of the county. And [it is ordered] that he shall take no fee; that he shall be sheriff for no more than one year in all; that during the year he shall render his accounts at the exchequer and be responsible for his term [of office]; that the king, from the royal income, shall make [allowances] to him in proportion to his receipts, so that he may rightly keep the county; and that he shall take no fees, neither he nor his bailiffs. And if they are convicted [of such wrong doing], let them be punished. It should be remembered that, with regard to the Jewry and the wardens of the Jewry, such reforms are to be established as shall carry out the oath in their respect." The king never carried out fully the terms regarding the sheriff; for he named royal clerks to shrieval office. Clerks, however, could be part of the landed gentry. No doubt the crown approved in principle the idea of appointing the sheriffs from landed gentry and from the county in which the person was to serve. It was valuable to the king to have a man who knew the county in the king's service. Requiring sheriffs to possess lands in the counties in which they served made it easier for the king to attach the sheriffs' property for debts owed the crown.

\(^2\)See citation for Treharne in Introduction, footnote #7.
growing out of the social, economic, and political changes of the early Angevin period.³ Over two centuries, from the conquest to the thirteenth century, a knight's role altered from that of rank and file soldier in the invading Norman army who had little to do with government, for this was the preserve of the barons, to a person of significant economic, social, and political power. In this sense Treharne believes the knightly class represented a new order in English society in that it had advanced from that of fighting man into the ranks of the upper levels of English society and royal administration.⁴ The knights possessed sizeable estates, and many could trace their ancestry back to the Norman conquest. Additionally, many were related to the great baronial families. Within the class itself one found a great deal of inter-relationship.⁵ Thus the


⁴Treharne, pp. 1-3. "But by 1258 a great change has come about. The status of the thirteenth century knight, from whatever angle it is viewed, whether military, social, economic, administrative, or political, is such that he can no longer be regarded on any lower plane than that of the nobility, even though we must qualify his class as the lesser nobility" (Treharne, p. 3). Humnisett, pp. 170-71.

⁵Treharne, pp. 3, 7, 10; Cam, Communities, p. 43; Templeman, pp. 43-44; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," pp. 41, 43.
knights were tied to the great tenants in chief by birth, social status, economic interests, and political influence.

The Norman knight had changed from a military man to a civilian. He possessed land, often a fee if not more, and frequently his possessions were scattered in several counties. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the social status of the sheriff and to determine the holdings of a select group of them from the six counties. This examination should enable us to relate the late thirteenth-century and early fourteenth-century feudal and social system to the administrative structure of Edwardian England.

Available evidence indicates that most of the thirty-four sheriffs examined in this section attained knighthood. Only one of the number, Roger de Seyton, apparently did not. This would indicate that the sheriffs at least met the minimum standard of property or income for this rank. Undoubtedly many more in the six counties as well as the other counties were also knights.

6Treharne, pp. 3-6.

7See Harlean Society Publication, Vol. 80-84, listing the knights of Edward I's reign. One would find many men listed not only for the four county units but all of the counties. The chapter dealing with shrieval social status involves a study of thirty-four of the approximately 125 sheriffs in the six counties. C.C.R., 1288-96, p. 35 (John le Breton); C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 454 (Thomas Wale); C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 413 (Hugh Gubyun); C.C.R., 1279-88, pp. T90, 195 (John de Vallibus); C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 255, 321 (Hamo Hauteyn); C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 130 (Robert de
Cam rightly noted that any attempt to categorize the sheriff strictly into gentry or clerks led to a misunderstanding of the class structure. A clerk had entered, at least, some minor religious order perhaps as part of his education. The term also denoted an individual employed on the king's staff or in a department of state. Master Roger de Seyton, a frequent royal justice, William Gerberg, Alan de Retheby, were described as the king's clerks. Leofwin fitz Leofwin and John de Sheffield were clerks who apparently never became knights but possibly because of their competence and loyalty rose to the position of sheriff as well as to many other offices. The fact that a man was a clerk did not mean that he could not attain knighthood. At least three sheriffs, William de Boyvill, John de Kirkeby, and Walter de Shelfhanger, at

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Cam, Communities, pp. 38-39, 45.

Foss, III, p. 152. Foss states that whenever the title "master" is used, it denotes that the person is a clerk. El59/52, m. 8 (Master Roger de Seyton); C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 318; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 485; C.P.R., T292-1301, pp. 258, 551 (William Gerberg); "Sheriffs of Northumberland," pp. 39-40 (Alan de Retheby); C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 242 (Leonius fitz Leonius); C.P.R., 1292-1301, pp. 33, 214, 487 (John de Sheffield).
some time during their careers were royal clerks and also rose to the social rank of knight.\textsuperscript{10}

Two other categories of men, municipal citizens and yeoman, became English sheriffs. Richar de Refham, citizen of London, became sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk. Nicholas le Scot, citizen and merchant of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, not only became sheriff of Northumberland but also served as mayor and keeper of Newcastle. Both Refham and Scot were knights.\textsuperscript{11} While the documents did not clearly define the term "yeoman," William de Felton and Hugh Audeley were described as the "king's yeoman," but they also were knights.\textsuperscript{12} John Lestrange\textsuperscript{13} and John Hayward,\textsuperscript{14} however, were designated as the "king's yeoman" but never became knights.

If Treharne is correct in claiming that sheriffs were possessors of substantial wealth, it is not surprising

\begin{footnotes}
\item[10] C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 47; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 21 (William de Boyvill); C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 251; Mitchell, p. 359; Knights, 81, pp. 288-89 (John de Kirkeby); C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 5; Knights, 82, p. 247 (Walter de Shelfhanger).
\item[12] "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 41; C.P.R., 1279-88, p. 7; Knights, Vol. 81, p. 9 (William de Felton); Fine Rolls, 1307-19, p. 147; Knights, Vol. 80, p. 27 (Hugh de Audeley).
\item[13] C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 252.
\item[14] C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 423.
\end{footnotes}
that many should have become or already were knights. King Edward I attempted to compel all persons holding lands valued at £20 to accept knighthood. It must be remembered, however, that at least some sheriffs did not respond to the king's order. Perhaps they evaded the king's decree on the subject, lacked the property value or wealth to qualify for the honor, or were clerks attached permanently to the government and sent from Westminster to govern on the king's behalf contrary to the Provisions of Oxford.\footnote{See footnote #1, Chapter III for Provisions of Oxford. Stephehson and Marcham, p. 161, "The king to the sheriff of Gloucester, greeting. We command and firmly enjoin you without delay to distrain all men of your bailiwick possessing land to the value of £20 a year, who hold of us in chief and who ought to be knights but are not, to receive from us the arms of knighthood before the feast of the Lord's Nativity next or on the same day. You are also to distrain without delay all men of your bailiwick from whomsoever they hold, possessing land to the value of £20 or a whole knight's fee worth £20 a year, who ought to be knights but are not, to receive such arms on the same feast or before. And in this connection [see to it] that you obtain from the same men good and sufficient security, and have the names of all those men inscribed in a certain roll by view of two lawful knights of the aforesaid county, and sent to us without delay under your seal and seals of the two knights aforesaid. And we wish you to know that we shall make diligent investigation with regard to your conduct in the execution of this mandate."}

In order to understand the relationship between the shriveal class and the social system it is necessary to examine in some detail their lands and locations of these holdings, their family ties, their feudal status, and connections to the king. We have selected a total of thirty-four sheriffs, from each of the six counties whose careers
spanned the late period of Henry III through the early years of Edward II in order to test Treharne's thesis in the different parts of England in which these counties are located and over a given period of time.

The investigation into the holdings of the thirty-four sheriffs disclosed that they could be classified into three major divisions. One group of sheriffs, fourteen in number, possessed extensive property or fiefs, and perhaps can be classified as part of the great nobility. A second group of eight had extensive possessions but not so great as the first. A third group of ten had only small or modest holdings while two could not be classified easily.

The Mortimer family (Mortuo Mari) had played a major role in the Welsh marcher regions for many generations, and this family was one of England's great baronial clans through its main line. It was not at all surprising, therefore, that members of the family should take an active part in the region. Hugh de Mortuo Mari of Richards Castle, Hereford, served as sheriff of Shropshire and Staffordshire in the early years of Edward's reign. Hugh must rank as a great tenant in chief for the lands and fees held in
Hereford, Worcester, Essex, and Shropshire. He and his wife inherited lands in Ireland and Wales. While the Welsh carucate was an enfeoffment from the widow of Llewelyn ap Gilbert, perhaps the Irish lands came to them as heirs to the earl of March, in which case he was related to another great baronial family. It should be noted that Hugh de Mortuo Mari was an important baron whose possessions while centered in the west and Welsh border region were not exclusively there. Also Hugh himself had excellent connections with English society. He was himself a member of a powerful frontier family and was related to another through the earl of March.

In the late thirteenth century two members of the Corbet family, the father and son, Robert and Thomas, became sheriffs of Shropshire and Staffordshire. Both men attained knighthood and perhaps were related to the barons

16 Hugh de Mortuo Mari held in chief Richard's Castle, Hereford as part of the barony of Bureford. In this he held 32-1/4 fees in many counties, including some in Shropshire and Wickebald manor, and lands at Codrugg, Huleston, and Homm in Worcestershire. He also held Stepelton, Hereford, Walfeston manor, Shropshire and lands in Essex. *Knights*, Vol. 82, p. 211; *C.P.R.*, 1301-7, p. 257.

17 *C.P.R.*, 1272-81, p. 76; *C.P.R.*, 1292-1301, pp. 304, 358; *C.P.R.*, 1301-7, pp. 334, 467; *C.C.R.*, 1272-79, pp. 48-49; *C.C.R.*, 1302-7, pp. 62, 180-81, 221, 285-86, 328, 337; *Knights*, Vol. 82, p. 211; *Inquisitions*, II, pp. 86-87; E159748, m. 27d.
of Caus. Robert held a considerable amount of property in Shropshire and some in Leicester; however, he apparently held little of it as a royal vassal. Thus while Corbet may not qualify as a major tenant in chief, he was, nevertheless, a significant member of the landed class.

One of the more prominent and rising families in Shropshire and Staffordshire was the Audeley family. The father, James, was sheriff in Shropshire and Staffordshire and justice of Chester. His public career spanned the middle and late years of Henry III and the early years of Edward I. He had several sons, James, William, Henry, and Hugh. Hugh, who followed his father's career and became sheriff in Shropshire, had a son, also by the name of Hugh, who received the earldom of Gloucester.

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James, a tenant in chief, controlled many fiefs and his lands extended into several counties. Many of his possessions were in Shropshire and Staffordshire. Additionally he held lands in Oxford, Cambridge, and Chester. Many of James' holdings were not tenancies from the king. Hugh de Audeley was described as a man from Staffordshire where he may have taken up residence. Apparently he was not so large a proprietor as his father, although his lands were equally dispersed throughout England. He had possessions in Northampton, Gloucester, Cambridge, and Oxford.

22 C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 72; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 255; C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 47; E159/49, m. 18d.

23 James de Audeley held among other possessions the ferm of the vill of Newcastle-under-Lyme and large parts of the manors of Egemundon, Newport, Marchumle, and Weston in Shropshire. E159/48, mm. 1d, 27d; E159/50, m. 31d; Inquisitions, II, pp. 67-68.

24 He held from the earl of Oxford the manor of Horseth in Cambridge, and in Chester he held rents in the city of Chester and the manor of Newhull in addition to small scattered pieces. Frarrer, p. 64; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 67, 234; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 14, 16; Inquisitions, II, p. 67.

By the time we come into contact with the Audeley family they are already well established in governmental service, property, and social status. Perhaps James and Hugh have not entered the ranks of the great nobility; however, in the succeeding generation the family certainly does when Hugh's son became earl of Gloucester.

The Lestrange family also provided sheriffs for Shropshire and Staffordshire. The Lestrange name was rather common and thus it was difficult to deal accurately with the men. John, the father of Hamo and Roger became sheriff in Shropshire as did Hamo. Roger, on the other hand, became sheriff of York and held many important royal appointments. John Lestrange of Ercole also became sheriff of Shropshire and Staffordshire in the late Edwardian period, but there was no indication that he was related to Hamo and Roger.

Hamo Lestrange, a tenant in chief, was a close associate of Prince Edward in the late 1250's, thus indicating that this particular family had close connections with the crown. Hamo possessed extensive holdings throughout England. While many of his lands were in Shropshire and Staffordshire, he also had property in

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26C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 125; Lists, p. 117; Foss, III, p. 158; Knights, Vol. 83, p. 298. While John Lestrange of Ercole apparently was no relation to Hamo and Roger Lestrange, John did have lands in Shropshire.
Sussex, Hampshire, and Worcester. Roger Lestrange was probably better off economically than his brother. Perhaps Roger benefited from the family ties with the king as well as from his governmental career. Roger, like his brother, a tenant in chief, held lands in Shropshire, Bedford, Chester, Leicester, and Gloucester. Through his wife Maud, formerly the wife of the late Roger de Moubray, he secured 200 marks in rents from her dowary. Besides these holdings, at various times and under various conditions he held castles and forests.


Roger Lestrange acquired Colemere and Henton from his brother as well as Ellesmere. He held Chesworthine and Wylton manors, Shropshire, Staffold manor, Bedfordshire, and Hitchin manor, Suffolk. C.P.R., 1272-81, pp. 105, 125, 336; C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 120, 336-37; C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 549; C.P.R., 1301-7, pp. 288, 471, 529; Inquisitions, II, p. 83; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 38, 52, 67; Knights, Vol. 83, pp. 299-301; Foss, III, p. 158.
Although both Hamo and Roger held lands in many parts of England, the family's center of activity seems to have been Shropshire and the west. Unquestionably through family service, property, and association with the kings Henry III and Edward I, the Lestrange family must be considered important. If they are not yet one of the greatest baronial families, they certainly must rank among the major barons of the realm.

Adam de Gesmuth, a knight of Northumberland, who became sheriff of the same county, was seemingly a significant land holder although one cannot be absolutely certain. While he was connected through his two marriages to Robert Gower of York and Walter de Ireby, he apparently did not receive any lands from his wives. While he possessed land of his own, he rose in rank through his association to the king's cause during the baronial uprisings. Gesmuth, as sheriff of Northumberland, vigorously defended the county against the rebels. Because of his loyalty to the crown, he was the recipient of grants from king Henry and prince Edward. Perhaps he would have gained additional lands and rank for his constant devotion and

service if he had not failed to return from the crusade on which he accompanied Edward.31

Robert de Nevill who came from an important English clan served as sheriff of Northumberland under Henry III and continued his public career into Edward's reign. He became a tenant in chief, having inherited his grandfather's estates.32 Nevill held property in a number of counties, but his major interests were located in Lincoln, York, and Northumberland. His wife's holdings in Northumberland, York, and Durham were valued at £100 while he held fifteen to twenty fees, excluding his wife's wealth and property. The holdings of Nevill would place him in the ranks of wealthy barons; yet, Nevill, like others of his class, pursued a career in the government. Perhaps he


hoped to acquire more wealth, to protect his interests, or to rise higher in the aristocracy through royal favor.\textsuperscript{33}

Toward the close of Henry III's reign and during the middle years of Edward II's reign two persons named Bassingburn assumed shrieval duties in Northampton. Warin, the first to become sheriff, was a knight and personal associate of the king and especially of the future Edward I during the baronial struggles.\textsuperscript{34} As a result of his friendship with the prince Edward, Warin de Bassingburn greatly increased his wealth to the point where we must rank him as one of the more substantial gentry who gained much from his devoted service to the crown. He received lands and fees confiscated from the rebels as well as valuable wardships and escheats. Independent of these gifts, Warin inherited lands from his father, received

\textsuperscript{33}Nevill held property in Somerset, Rutland, and possibly Cambridge, Huntingdon, and Northampton. In Northumberland he held through his wife Mitford and Felton in addition to Raskelf, Horton, and Sutton manors, York as well as lands from the bishop of Durham in Durham. In Lincoln he held five knights' fees from the earl of Lincoln in the manors of Burreth, Stratton, Randeby, Steyton, Bekeby, Keleby, Ussely, Stalingburough of which at least part came to him through his wife Ida. He personally held in chief part of Nettelton, Lincoln; and besides nine fees in York he held several parts of knights' fees scattered through Yorkshire. \textit{Charter Rolls}, Vol. II, p. 445; \textit{C.P.R.}, 1272-81, p. 201; \textit{C.P.R.}, 1281-92, p. 409; \textit{Inquisitions}, II, pp. 172, 189, 200, 249, 257, 293-95; \textit{Fine Rolls}, 1272-1307, pp. 167-69, 183-84; E159/49, m. 33d; \textit{C.C.R.}, 1279-88, pp. 117, 124, 355, 485, 491; \textit{Knights}, Vol. 82, pp. 259-60.

\textsuperscript{34}Knights, Vol. 80, pp. 56-57; Powicke, p. 153.
lands from the earl of Richmond, and held in chief land
from the crown. Although Warin de Bassingburn served as
sheriff in Northampton, his seat of power and the center
for most of his holdings was not Northampton but
Cambridge. Perhaps he served in Northampton because
of his loyalty to the king rather than in accordance with
the principle that the sheriff should have some interest in
the county in which he held office.

Roger de Colevill served as sheriff in Norfolk and
Suffolk at the close of Henry III's reign and continued to
participate in public service during Edward's lifetime.
Colevill attained knighthood and was closely associated
with Carleton, Suffolk, although his family came from
Lincoln where he retained vast holdings. Without record­
ing the manors and parts of manors which belonged to
Colevill, suffice it to say that he held well over 400

35 From Edward Warin de Bassingburn acquired a manor
in county Limerick, Ireland, holding it for service of two
knights' fees and received Hardredshull, Chishull, and
Weston manors, Cambridge, lands seized from the rebels as
well as lands in the forest of Clyne and £100 wardships
and escheats. In addition to those grants made to Warin by
Edward, Bassingburn had possession of one-half fee in the
manor of Bassingburn, Cambridge from the earl of Richmond,
one hide of land from William de Cheney in the honor of
Bulange in Cambridge, the site of a castle and £30 value
of lands in Cambridge for one-fourth knight's fee in the
honor of Richmond, and a water mill and one acre of land
held from Geoffrey de Rus in Cambridge. Charter Rolls,
Vol. II, pp. 46, 57; Farrer, pp. 24, 25, 118, 253; Knights,
Vol. 80, pp. 56-57; Inquisitions, I, p. 225.

36 Knights, Vol. 80, p. 224; Farrer, p. 117 gives a
genealogy of Colevill's family.
acres of land and approximately six knights' fees in Lincolnshire alone. Colevill apparently had lands in Norfolk, but his Suffolk holdings were more numerous. He also had possessions in Cumberland, Leicester, Cambridge, and York. Although the evidence was contradictory with regard to Colevill's holdings at the time of his death, several sources indicated that he held nothing in chief when he died; perhaps these referred only to his possessions this side of the Trent. On the other hand equally reliable sources indicated that he held much from the king although all of these may have been beyond the Trent. Regardless of how he held his lands or from whom he held them, Roger de Colevill must be recognized as one of the greatest landed gentry in this study.


38 Roger de Colevill received from Robert de Monte Alto lands in Carleton, Pettshage, and Cassingland for one and one-third knights' fees; and he may have held additional territory at Carleton manor from Henry III. Besides the lands in Lincoln, Norfolk, and Suffolk, Hayketon manor, Cumberland came into his hands through his wife, and a bequest from his father brought him Weston manor, Cambridge and lands at Berke and Thistleton, Rutland, and the manor of Muston in Leicester. In addition Roger de Colevill held the manor of Normanton, Leicester and other lands in Cambridge from the earl of Albelmarle, valued at one knight's fee, and unknown lands and chattels in York. Farrer, pp. 118, 269; Charter Rolls, Vol. II, p. 461; C.C.R., 1272-79, pp. 215, 356, 415; C.C.R., 1279-88, pp. 233, 360, 435, 501, 505; C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 68, 170; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 295; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, pp. 245, 247, 263; E159/48, m. 25; E159/50, m. 33; Inquisitions, II, pp. 136-37, 420-21.
John de Vallibus, knight of Kesewyh, Norfolk, served briefly as sheriff in Norfolk and Suffolk and continued to serve the king in the judiciary much of his life. Apparently he carried on a family tradition, for his grandfather was also a royal justice. While not one of the greatest nobles in England, John de Vallibus must be counted among the great feudal tenants, for he held between 90 and 100 fiefs. The evidence does not set forth as clearly as it does for Roger de Colevill the nature or size of his possessions. Although John held tenements from the king, his largest group of fees, 31-3/4, was held in Norfolk from Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, and it was perhaps through his association with Bigod that Vallibus entered into royal service. By virtue of the fact that he held so many fees, John de Vallibus must be classified among the leading English nobility. His long tenure in the king's judiciary and his assumption of high administrative posts indicated that he had gained influence and status.

39 Knights, Vol. 84, pp. 96-97; Foss, III, p. 166.

40 Besides his many fiefs in Norfolk, John de Vallibus had numerous fees in Suffolk, including 14-3/4 fees in the honor of Richmond and others scattered throughout Cambridge, Essex, Lincoln, and London. Inquisitions, II, pp. 211, 212, 338, 402-4; E159/48, m. 25; E159/50, m. 33; C.C.R., 1279-88, pp. 185, 406, 407, 497, 530-31; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 174; Charter Rolls, Vol. II, pp. 46, 47, 73, 150, 205; Foss, III, p. 166; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 244; Knights, Vol. 84, p. 97; Farrer, p. 56.
with the king and the king's lieutenants—in fact he was one of the king's lieutenants.

William Giffard represented the type of sheriff whose social status was difficult to determine. He was a knight, citizen of Bristol, the archbishop of York's brother, and a relative to a bishop of Worcester. Giffard served the king in various capacities but not to the extent John de Lythelegreynes, Bogo de Knovill, or John de Vallibus did. Because the records failed to provide the number of fiefs, size of holdings, or value of lands with any degree of accuracy, it was difficult to judge his station in society; 41

41C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 171; C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 107; Knights, Vol. 81, p. 117.

42In spite of the scarcity of information we know that William Giffard held two-thirds of a knight's fee in Wendege, Cambridge in the honor of Richmond as well as the manors of Chereye, Asperden, and Bradefeld, Hertford which were lands confiscated from the rebel, Ralph fitz Fulk and granted to William by the king. He held the manor of Fullburne, Cambridge for two knights' fees and invested his mother-in-law with the manor for the remainder of her life in exchange for her manor of Barwe in the same county. Peter of Savoy vested William with one-third and one-ninth of a fee in Fletham, York; and Giffard held from an unidentified source lands, tenements, and rents in Tadynton, Ballinghope, and Cleheengre, Hereford. These Hereford possessions were disposed of, part apparently going to the bishop of Worcester and his heirs, and in exchange with Alvred de le Northgrave for 50 acres of land, 2 acres of meadow, a messuage, and rents in Stonelawe, Gloucester. Furthermore, Giffard held lands in Bures, Essex and through his wife came into possession of the hundred of Berstaple, Essex. From Geoffry de Upton Giffard received all the lands in the territory and town of Upton along with a messuage, buildings, gardens, dikes, homages, and escheats and the same in Walrigg and the wood of Hamden. Farrer, pp. 19, 77; Knights, Vol. 81, p. 117; Inquisitions, II, p. 222; C.C.R.,
nevertheless, he seemed to be a substantial vassal with good connections as indicated by his receipt of confiscated lands from the crown. Perhaps his brother's position as one of the leading ecclesiastical lords enhanced the entire family's social position and prestige.

Although he became sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk, John le Breton, the custodian of London and royal officer, was described as a knight from Essex and tenant in chief. He held at least 500 acres of land throughout the English shires, many of which were located in Northampton and Cambridge. Also, according to Foss, the Breton family held extensive properties in Norfolk; however, Foss was not clear about John's specific relationship to the Norfolk family. John le Breton, like John de Vallibus, Roger de Colevill, and perhaps William Giffard, stood above the ordinary member of his class because of his wealth in property or fees; yet, he, like the others, was not one of the great barons. Certainly his station and influence must have risen because of his service to the king. He represented the king in Norfolk and Suffolk and many other offices, including that of custodian of London, an


43 Knights, Vol. 80, p. 140; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 533.
appointment he retained for many years while the city remained in the king's direct control. 44

Not all of the Edwardian sheriffs were great land holders. Eight of those in this study, who, nevertheless, had active governmental careers, were men of more modest circumstances.

A second member of the great Mortuo Mari family, Ralph, became sheriff in Shropshire and Staffordshire in the early years of Edward I's reign. Except in some distant and obscure way Ralph and Hugh were not closely related. 45 Ralph, son of Sir Roger of Wigmore was a tenant in chief. 46 He held a capital and messuage, land and rent from the king in Buckingham and other property in Lincoln,

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44 John le Breton controlled 65 acres of various properties in Dudington by Stanford, and in Blathewick and Laxton in Northampton he possessed between 180 and 190 acres of various types of lands from different grantors. He also had property at Walkerly, Boxtede, and Harrington, Northampton. In Cambridge he inherited from his father nearly 200 acres; these included lands at Burg, Dullinham, and Hurleston. In Essex he held Le Gernere or La Cornere and Beilham as well as Colneyse, Suffolk. John held the manor of Wesfeld in Norfolk for one-half knight's fee. He also acquired through subinfeudation some unspecified property in Buckinghamshire and the church of Fennysutton in the diocese of Salisbury, lands at Colburn and Aynderby, York and the advowson of Finkhale in the same county came into his possession. Inquisitions, II, pp. 44, 214, 215, 221, 222; Inquisitions, IV, p. 238; C.C.R., 1302-7, pp. 173, 384-85; C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 177; C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 259; E159/50, m. 8d; Fine Rolls, 1307-19, pp. 93, 94, 102; Farrer, pp. 111, 112, 214; Knights, Vol. 80, p. 140; Foss, III, p. 61.

45 Knights, Vol. 82, pp. 211, 215.

Gloucester, Shropshire and Staffordshire.\footnote{Ralph owed the king the service of one-sixth knight's fee for the Buckinghamshire possessions. In addition he held for one-half knight's service lands at Withersthorp, Lincolnshire from John de Westemeyes and occupied the lands of Henry de Penebrugge in Gloucestershire and unspecified tenements in Shropshire and Staffordshire. \textit{Inquisitions}, II, pp. 61, 261; \textit{Knights}, Vol. 82, p. 215.} By comparison to Hugh de Mortuo Mari, Ralph seems to have possessed only modest holdings.

Thomas Corbet, heir to his father Robert, apparently held much less land than his father. The evidence indicated that Thomas possessed his mother's unidentified lands and Watlesburgh and Habbaley manors for the service of 2-1/2 knights' fees. Perhaps many of his father's known possessions came through his wife, or his father may have held them on limited tenure. Possibly Thomas inherited only part or lost some of the lands through debts incurred by himself or his father.\footnote{Knights, Vol. 80, p. 236; \textit{C.C.R.}, 1272-79, p. 340; \textit{C.C.R.}, pp. 137, 138; \textit{C.C.R.}, 1288-96, pp. 267-71; \textit{C.C.R.}, 1296-1302, p. 384; \textit{Fine Rolls}, 1307-19, p. 44.} It is difficult to estimate the value and size of the Corbet estates. The two were engaged in governmental service, and they may have undertaken this employment to augment their lands through royal favor or graft. Perhaps they served the king in order to gain prestige and protect the family interests.

Guichard de Charron, elder and younger, represented one of those families rising through both public and
private administrative service and family connections. The father served the king as steward of Richmond, and the elder's uncle was Peter of Savoy. Both of these knights not only held shrieval rank, but over the years they also held judicial commissions and worked for the bishop of Durham in various capacities. It was extremely difficult to evaluate Guichard senior's possessions and feudal obligations. They were not comparable to the holdings of Hugh de Mortuo Mari, the Audely family, or the Lestrange brothers; yet, as we shall see, they were probably more extensive than other sheriffs who were not great landed proprietors. Charron held lands in Northumberland, Cumberland, York, and Nottingham. Presumably the son inherited his father's possessions and acquired additional holdings in Northumberland and York.  


50Guichard de Charron senior held Horton manor near Blythe, a house converted into a castle and lands at Shireve, Sticklawe, and Hereford, Northumberland by grant of William de Valance and Gateshead in the same county. Because of his service to the bishop of Durham he may have received lands in the palatine county from the bishop. Apparently Guichard held lands in Cumberland, the manor of Sutton, Nottingham for 11 s. per year and foreign service. Additionally he had unspecified lands in York and received custody of Bowes castle and Richard forest for himself and his heirs from Peter of Savoy. Although it is not clear, presumably Guichard de Charron the younger inherited his father's possessions. He did retain Horton in Blythe and acquired a toft and 33 acres of land and meadows at Carleton, Northumberland. Both men gained some property through marriage; the son acquired lands in Cumberland through his marriage to Alice, the daughter of lord Lucy of Cochemmouth.  

Charter Rolls, Vol. II, pp. 70-71, 149, 372;
Walter and John de Cambhou of Northumberland were third generation government officials. Walter's father, Robert, like his son and grandson, served the king as sheriff of Northumberland. By whatever means the family first entered into royal employment, this work became a tradition for them; and Walter and John can be classified as professional civil servants. Walter's possessions were all in Northumberland; and although he held nothing in chief from the king, he was still a knight. John, also a Northumbrian knight, no doubt inherited his father's holdings in addition to a park a Horton by Catton, Northumberland which he acquired.

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E159/50, m. 18; Fraser, p. 29; C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 201; C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 2; Knights, Vol. 80, p. 195; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," pp. 35, 40; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 61; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 523; Inquisitions, II, pp. 43, 343; Inquisitions, IV, p. 44; Inquisitions, V, p. 120.


52C.C.R., 1288-96, p. 492; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 372; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 36. At the time of his death Walter supposedly held nothing in chief from the king; yet, the escheator received orders to seize his lands. Perhaps the king ordered this action to make certain that Cambhou held nothing in chief, or the escheator may have seized the lands because Walter owed debts to the king. Cambhou may have disposed of all his holdings from the king before his death.

53Walter held Cambhou and Shaftow manors which were part of the barony of Beck. Part of his possessions included a portion of Mitford castle, lands at Milesden and Preswick which he held from Roger Bertram as well as certain lands at Deanham, Meldon, River Green, Lithedon, and Colewell, the latter of which came to him through his wife, the daughter of William fitz Geoffrey of Horton. John
Humphrey de Bassingburn became sheriff in Northampton more than 60 years after Warin assumed the same office. In spite of the similarity in the name and the fact that both men held lands in Cambridge, these two sheriffs were not closely related if they were related at all. Warin's son and heir was Edward while Humphrey's son and heir was his namesake. Although Humphrey was a tenant in chief, he was not as wealthy or well connected to power as the late Warin. But he was not a small holder either. Humphrey held a number of partial fees in Cambridge. Unlike Warin, Humphrey also had lands in other counties, including Northampton where both men were sheriff, as well as property in York.

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55 Humphrey de Bassingburn held at least one-half fee and probably more in the honor of Richmond in Cambridge besides one-half fee knight's service in Wyles and another one-half fee service in Fordham in the same county. He inherited from his father's estate of Thorton and Steward in York, lands held of Peter de Savoy, as well as Halpthorn, Callerstock, and Benefield. He had possession of the manor and advowson of Beningfeud, perhaps from his father's estate. He may have inherited the manor of Abyndon through his parents although this is by no means certain. C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 112; C.C.R., 1296-1302, p. 153; C.C.R., T302-7, p. 360; Knights, Vol. 80, pp. 55-56; Farrer, pp. 137, 139.
Hamo Hauteyn and his brother Bartholomew began their careers in the service of the earl of Gloucester, being described as knights bachelors to the earl. The brothers participated in the baronial revolt against Henry III, and perhaps Hamo represented the baronial interests during his tenure as sheriff (1258-60) in Norfolk and Suffolk. In spite of his early adherence to the king's enemies, Hamo and his brother received a pardon for their transgressions; and Hamo continued for many years in the king's service as justice of the Jews and on gaol delivery commissions. He also became a royal knight. According to Foss, Hamo Hauteyn's family came from Norfolk; and he held property in that county and in Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Dorsetshire or Somerset, and London. Hamo Hauteyn was not a great land holder by comparison to Roger de Colevill; he was a proprietor of more modest means. Hamo, nevertheless, established himself in the administration through his association with the earl of Gloucester and the king.

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56 Knights, Vol. 81, p. 205; E159/48, m. 25; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 110.

57 Hamo Hauteyn held lands at Heylisdone, Norfolk as well as lands, a watermill, fishery, right of presentation to the church at Oxendish, Norfolk. In addition to his Norfolk property Hauteyn held lands at Brunne, Cambridge, a messuage in London, and probably other holdings in Lincolnshire and either in Somerset or Dorset. Hauteyn owed money to the king through the sheriff of Somerset and Dorset; perhaps one can infer that he held lands in one or both of
Out of the thirty-four men examined in the study of the sheriffs' social status ten of them can be classified as small property holders. Thus the group of small holders would be the second largest of the three categories used in this investigation.

Two knights named Robert Grendon served as sheriffs in Shropshire and Staffordshire. There was no evidence to establish a relationship between the two men; however, since both men apparently came from Staffordshire, the possibility of some kinship cannot be dismissed entirely. The elder Grendon may have had some property in Stafford for which he was indebted to the king, and Henry III awarded him lands of condemned rebels in Warwick and Leicester. This would seem to suggest that Grendon supported the royal cause during the baronial conflict and perhaps had some close connection with the king. The younger Grendon who became sheriff of Glamorgan in 1314 and sheriff of Shropshire and Staffordshire in 1318 also became marshall of the king's hall in 1323. Perhaps he too had close connections with the king. He possessed a pasture at Hildreston, Staffordshire. From the available evidence these men were not great landed gentry; yet, they attained

these shires. Foss, III, pp. 101-2; Knights, Vol. 81, p. 205; Inquisitions, II, pp. 485-86; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 267; E159/49, m. 28d; E159/50, m. 32; C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 46, 353, 467; C.C.R., 1279-88, p. 418; C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 89, 176.
a relatively high rank in the king's service. This was especially true of the younger Robert Grendon. 58

John de Lythegreynes, one of the leading public career officers of his day, was a man of uncertain background. If he did not come from the north, he established himself there. His knightly arms indicated a tie to the Bailiols, a northern family. 59 Like Adam de Gesmuth, Lythegreynes was both a deputy sheriff and sheriff in Northumberland, but Lythegreynes was a relatively small land holder and disposed of the active management of most of his holdings. He may have granted out the possessions in York, Cumberland, and Northumberland because his extensive duties with the royal government prevented him from tending to them. 60

Richard de Harley, a knight from Shropshire, seems to have been one of those small holders who entered

58 Knights, Vol. 81, pp. 142-43; C.P.R., 1279-88, p. 442; C.P.R., T301-7, p. 282; E159/50, m. 32.


60 John de Lythegreynes held Dalton by Baynton, York; and he and his wife received enfeoffment of Levington castle and manor, York from Nicholas de Meyvill. Lythegreynes and his wife also held the manor of Lysingby or Laysingby, Cumberland and the advowson of Mitford, Northumberland. The advowson of Mitford seemed to be the only possession he held in Northumberland where he spent his early public career. C.P.R., 1281-92, p. 347; C.P.R., 1301-7, pp. 189, 530; Charter Rolls, Vol. II, pp. 284, 413; Knights, Vol. 82, pp. 51-52; "Sheriffs of Northumberland," p. 36.
administrative service as a means to gain social status and to increase his wealth by means of his service. His career, besides that of sheriff, included assessor, conservator of the peace, commissioner of array, and justice. Richard may have been aided in the attainment of offices by his family connection to Malcom de Harley, his uncle and one of the king's leading officers. Additionally he found employment with both the houses of Savoy and Arundel. His holdings, however, did not place him among the important gentry.61

Roger Minot, knight from Northumberland or possibly Cumberland, was, like Robert de Harley, a gentleman of moderate means.62 He possessed some land in Northumberland, Norfolk, and York. Minot was not among the wealthy sheriffs, and for this reason might have entered governmental service. But from all indications his work for the king was minimal. Possibly he lacked good connections and advanced slowly, or he might have found government work too

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62Knights, Vol. 82, p. 158; C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 249. The references indicate either Cumberland or Northumberland but are not clear.
great a personal financial risk and preferred to tend to his own interests. 63

From 1278 to 1281 and from 1290 to 1294, William de Redham, a Norfolk knight, served as sheriff in his home county. 64 What evidence there is concerning Redham indicated that his holdings were confined to Norfolk. The fact that we have no information concerning the size of the holdings or total number of fiefs made it difficult to judge his social status or wealth. Conceivably the paucity of information would suggest that Redham was a very minor member of the gentry who, like men of his class, entered royal service for prestige, emolument, and opportunity to look after his own interests. 65

William Gerberg who became sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk in the mid-1290's, had a rather unusual career and social background. He was a Yarmouth merchant who at one time was removed from the coroner's office because his

63 It is uncertain which lands Roger Minot held in Northumberland and Norfolk, but he possessed Kirkstede and some lands at Midelton, Yorkshire from the earl of Richmond. Perhaps he was related to the earl, or he or his family had served the earl. His Yorkshire wealth amounted to £ 40. 

64 E368/61, m. 4d; Knights, Vol. 83, p. 115.

65 William de Redham was described as master of Rockland, Haringby, Trickly, Limpenhoe, Southwood, Stockeslay, Witlehampton, Freethorp, and Redham manor of which the latter was held for the service of one-half knight's fee. Knights, Vol. 83, p. 115; E368/61, m. 6d.
mercantile interests took him out of the country for long periods. If William Gerberg, the merchant, and William Gerberg, the king's clerk, were one and the same person, and the dates for both indicate a strong possibility, then he had a unique career and strange social position. For no other sheriff had a career in church orders, royal service, and commercial life. Gerberg possessed some property in Norfolk, Wiltshire, Berkshire, and Suffolk, but as a merchant he may have had more wealth in intangible property. If, on the other hand, William Gerberg, merchant, and William Gerberg, the king's clerk, were not one and the same person, William Gerberg, the royal clerk, may have been one of those royal servants who received in the way of gifts or inheritances some modest holdings but who attained shrieval rank through his employment by the crown. The latter circumstance could have prevailed too if Gerberg were both clerk and merchant.

Robert Hereward, knight and one-time sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk, spent much of his life in royal and private administrative work. He not only represented the

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67 C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 318; C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 152, 326; C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 345; C.C.R., 1288-96, p. 227.
king as sheriff in Norfolk but also as sheriff in Cambridge and Huntingdon and served the bishop of Ely as his seneschal. Hereward participated on royal commissions and at one time became guardian of the vacant see of Ely.\textsuperscript{69} From all indications Hereward was a very small proprietor. He held one-half fee, valued at 100 s. in Gelden Moredum (Guldemordon) from William de Kirkeby. Speculation about Hereward would lead one to believe that he was a very minor landed gentry who entered upon a career in administration to support himself and to add to his wealth and status through the rewards and benefits of office.\textsuperscript{70}

Available evidence indicated that Master Roger de Seyton, clerk and frequently justice of the court of the royal courts attained neither knighthood nor held anything in chief from the king. Although he spent many years in royal service, his rewards must have come in the way of profits from office or direct payment from the king. John, son of Alan Weverton, conferred upon Seyton, the manor of Chaufhunt, Buckingham for ten years and apparently Seyton

\textsuperscript{69}Knights, Vol. 81, pp. 220-21; Cam, Communities, p. 47.

\textsuperscript{70}Knights, Vol. 81, pp. 220-21; C.C.R., 1302-7, p. 41; Cam, Communities, p. 47; Inquisitions, IV, p. 58.
held no other lands. John de Ashton, like several other sheriffs, was a small holder. Although a Northampton knight, his possessions in the county amounted to approximately £20 value.

Because so little information is known about the holdings of Bogo de Knoyill and William de Boyvill, it was difficult to assess their wealth and social position. William de Boyvill, the well known public official and royal clerk, came from an important northern family; and it was largely in this region that the tenant in chief possessed his lands. In spite of the fact that many of the specific holdings are unknown, he did possess lands in Northampton, Cumberland, Norfolk, Leicester, and Suffolk. He held lands from queen Eleanor, and Edmund, the king's brother held land from Boyvill. It is extremely interesting to note that he served as sheriff in Cumberland, Leicester, and Northampton and possessed lands in all three counties. As sheriff he must have had an excellent opportunity to protect if not enhance his own and his family's

71 C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 163; Inquisitions, II, p. 89; Foss, III, p. 153; Select Cases in the Court of the King's Bench under Edward I, ed. G. O. Sayles, 3 vols. (Selden Society, 55, 57, 58; London, 1936, 1938, 1939), pp. xliii, liii, lxiii-lxiv, cx, cxxxv-xxxix, cliv, 9, 16, 37, 40.

72 John de Ashton held 2 acres of land and 6 acres of meadow which he received from the king. Knights, Vol. 80, p. 220; Fine Rolls, 1307-19, p. 261.

73 Templeman, p. 42; C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 47; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 522.
interests. It is equally interesting to note the connection he had with the royal family; unfortunately, we do not know more about this relationship or how he may have benefited from it. 

Bogo de Knovill who was described as a man from Shropshire, a knight and tenant in chief became sheriff of Shropshire. While he possessed properties in Shropshire, Knovill held lands in Gloucester, Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Hereford. It is difficult to assess Bogo de Knovill's

74 Boyvill's holdings in Norfolk, Northampton and Cumberland are unknown. He did hold one fee from Peter de Brus in York as well as part of a fee at Skipton in Craven, York from queen Eleanor and the farm of the hundred of Gertre, Leicester from the queen. The inquisition into Philip de Heningham's lands revealed that Boyvill held from Philip a messuage and nearly 60 acres of land in Suffolk. Edmund, the king's brother, held the fee of Little Kelk from Boyvill. C.C.R., 1272-79, p. 46; C.C.R., 1279-88, pp. 356, 357, 425; C.C.R., 1288-96, pp. 133, 136, 152; C.P.R., 1281-92, pp. 87-88, 174; C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 223; Fine Rolls, 1272-1307, p. 116; Inquisitions, II, pp. 190, 354; E159/49, m. 18; E159/50, m. 18d; Templeman, p. 42. William Boyvill held lands in Cumberland and Leicester and was sheriff in these two counties.


76 Bogo de Knovill held a third part of the manor of Little Teyton and demense lands at Kilekote, Notteclive, Yeniton, Westbury, and Gravenhull, Gloucester, Duchess and Dene, Wiltshire, and Gratlee, Hampshire. He also held property in Hereford. In the Welsh Marches he controlled the manor of Marthen. At various times the king had invested Knovill with certain castles and lands during good pleasure. Under the tenure he exercised jurisdiction over the castles and manors of Oswestry, Certesleye, Stration, Ellesmere with the hundred of Wrokworthy, Dolnor castle and the lands of Kedewy. C.P.R., 1272-81, p. 270; C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 117; C.P.R., 1301-7, p. 81, Knovill held a
status, for we do not know the extent of his lands nor the number of fees which he possessed. Many of his holdings are at royal pleasure or for a limited tenure, and the value of his lands is uncertain. Even his family ties are vague. His holdings are in the west, and his career is largely in that region and in Wales; yet, other Knovills came from the Devon area. Perhaps all that one can say is that Bogo de Knovill was a land holder, tenant in chief, and important government official.

The examination of the selected group of sheriffs from the six counties tended to substantiate Treharne's thesis. With the few exceptions of the hereditary sheriffs in Lancaster, Worcester, and Cornwall the English sheriffs were not the king's great barons. Although those who became sheriffs still might perform military service attached to their fiefs and many fulfilled the obligations during the Welsh, French, and Scottish campaigns, they were not primarily fighting men. The care of their estates, frequent work in the administration for the crown, and equally frequent employment in an administrative capacity for the barons transformed the class from which the sheriff was drawn from that of a fighting man to that of a civilian.

At least thirty-three sheriffs examined in this part of the study had become or were to begin with knights and part of the landed gentry. While it is often difficult to assess accurately a man's wealth and position in society, it is obvious that the sheriffs fell into three general categories: Those who by the number of fiefs or amount of land had become leading members of the class and perhaps ranked as part or just beneath the greatest barons in the social scale, those who held substantial lands and fiefs, men who were reasonably well off, and those who possessed very little land and who were either royal clerks or gentry who simply held little property and few fiefs. Under the first class one would find, for example, Hugh de Mortuo Mari, the Lestrange family, and the Audeley family. The second group included the Charrons, the Cambhous, and Ralph de Mortuo Mari while the third included John de Lythegreynes, Roger Minot, and Roger Hereward. The three categories were nearly equal in numbers.

While it was not possible to determine exact relationships or estimate the number, most of the sheriffs were related to other families of the class or to the great baronial families. Some were in a position to benefit through family and personal ties. The Mortimers, Nevills,

A few clerks, Master Roger de Seyton and several merchants, Nicholas le Scot and Richer Refham, perhaps would not fall into the categories although Refham and Scot were knights.
and Boyvills were great families with wide connections throughout England. William Giffard's brother was the archbishop of York, and Hamo Hauteyn was associated with the earl of Gloucester although not through any family relationship. Hamo Lestrangé, Adam de Gesmuth, and Warin de Bassingburn were old comrades of Edward I before he inherited the throne.

In case of four families, for example, service to the government from one generation to another united the class to the government. Perhaps in some, if not in many instances, a family began its rise from obscurity to power through association with the king's government. Vallibus, Audeley, Lestrangé, and Cambhou were families whose work for the king dated back through at least two or three generations.

During the thirteenth century and continuing through Edward I's reign the knights of the shire, men who often possessed considerable wealth, became an increasingly important factor in English government. By whatever means and for whatever reason members of this class entered royal service they as a group participated actively in the king's government, and the king drew upon this particular class of subjects to fill many responsible positions. This social order of knights which served in the government and to which the sheriff belonged was tightly linked within itself through marriage and family relationships, and the members
of this group were also related to the king's great tenants in chief. Thus the social class to which the sheriff belonged came to be a significant political force. It possessed wealth; it participated in government and was part of the governmental machinery; it was strengthened by its internal ties and ties to the great barons of the realm.
CONCLUSION

The study of the Edwardian sheriff leads to several generalizations about the office and personnel who staffed it. In the first place the office did not undergo a serious diminution of its role in the English governmental system prior to or on the accession of Edward I or during his reign. Secondly, those men who became sheriffs were often part of a trained and experienced group of civil servants upon whom the king relied for the conduct of government. Finally, the sheriffs were drawn from a group of landed gentry, men who had high rank in the social structure and who were well connected to the seats of power through their own position, relationship to the great feudal barons, and in some cases to the royal family itself.

The evidence failed to uphold the thesis set forth by Morris, Cam, and Templeman that the office of sheriff declined in importance during the thirteenth century as the king transferred many powers once exercised by the sheriff to other officials. While one cannot deny that royal judges assumed judicial functions once entrusted to the sheriff, and escheators, coroners, and conservators of the peace, among others, assumed administrative responsibilities formerly performed by the sheriff and his staff, the sheriff remained the chief local officer representing the
king in the shire. He never wholly lost his judicial powers; he continued to serve as chief law officer; he retained his role as chief fiscal agent for the exchequer in the county; and, in general, he worked in conjunction with those who absorbed duties once entirely connected with his office. It would be more accurate to conclude that one person could not possibly conduct the vast responsibilities of local government with any sort of competence as the demands of office increased with the complexities of late medieval government.

The changes in the office as well as the jurisdictions and powers of the sheriff and the personnel who filled the position were the result of the growth of governmental activity. The office of sheriff was not unique in this respect, for the work load of the chancery, exchequer, courts, and household became immense in the thirteenth century and especially during Edward's reign. The king responded to this problem by creating new offices or officers to assume some of the duties formerly exercised by others. This certainly occurred in the case of the sheriff and does not indicate a diminution of his power but reflects the need for him to concentrate his energies on affairs which previously required only part of his attention.

Unquestionably Edward did not sanction or appreciate corrupt lieutenants, and Cam has adequately substantiated
this point. But the claim that the English king sought to check shrieval malpractices by reducing the responsibilities and powers of the office cannot be accepted in its entirety. The sheriff continued to exercise vast authority; and, besides, men guilty of corruption easily returned to royal favor by a payment of a fine. Although the duties assigned to the office of sheriff changed, and new officials participated with the sheriff, the sheriff retained the pre-eminent position in county government; and the effective operation of royal government on the local level depended upon the sheriff and his willingness to make that government work.

Through an examination of the men who became sheriffs and their careers it became apparent that the king did not entrust great responsibilities to inexperienced hands. The sheriffs, whether royal clerks or landed gentry, were men with many years of service in a variety of governmental assignments. Many of these men had additional administrative experience through the management of their own holdings or through employment by one of the great lay or ecclesiastical barons. These men had experience as judges, escheators, conservators of the peace, tax assessors, bailiffs of royal or private estates as well as numerous other appointments. Thus they participated regularly in government and became familiar with the processes and problems of administration. The king on his part desired
to employ men who were well trained and qualified for public service, perhaps men who through their service were sympathetic to the king's needs and interests.

Those who undertook a public career did so for many reasons: to gain political influence, to gain wealth through rewards and illegal acts, to attain social status as one of the king's officials. Regardless of the reason men sought service with the king, the king employed a class of subjects knowledgeable in public affairs through long years and varied appointments in governmental work. The office of sheriff was almost always filled by a professional civil servant.

The examination of the public career of the sheriff disclosed an association between the public servant and the social class structure. The Provisions of Oxford which the barons imposed upon king Henry III reflected this connection. The Provisions stated that the sheriff should possess substantial wealth and should hold lands in the county in which he served, and an examination of the evidence reveals that the sheriffs usually met this requirement. The sheriffs fell into three social-economic categories: those with sufficient property holdings or fiefs to rank very near the great barons in their wealth, those who were relatively well off, and those who apparently were small holders. Not only did the sheriffs tend to have a common economic and social background but they were
related often through kinship and marriage to each other and to the great baronial families of the realm.

The social status, economic strength, family relationships, and ties to the governmental system made the social group from which the sheriff came a formidable influence in England, an influence which was not arrested during the transformation of England from medieval to modern times but grew in power with the advent of the justices of the peace and Parliament's role in the nation's affairs.
APPENDIX

LIST OF SHERIFFS

John de Acton
Hugh de Audelegh
James de Audelegh
Thomas de Ardern
John de Ashton
Robert Baignard
Robert de Balliolo
Humphrey de Bassingburn
Warin de Bassingburn
Robert de Baud
Richard de Belhus
Walter de Bessy
Alexander Boudon
William de Boyvill
Geoffrey de Bradden
John le Breton
Eustace de Burneby
John de Cambhou
Walter de Cambhou
John de Caunton
William Caverswell or Kaverswell

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Guichard de Charron Sr.
Guichard de Charron Jr.
Roger de Cheigny
Alexander de Claveryng
Giles de Cogenho
Roger de Colevill
Robert Corbet
Thomas Corbet
John de Creppinges
Hugh de Croft
Ralph de Crophill
John de Dene
Thomas de Divelstone
John Druel
Nicholas le Espignorel or Spignorel
Robert de Faudon or Fawdon
William de Felton
John de Fenwyk
John de Fitton
William Gerberge
Adam de Gesmuth or Jesmond
William Giffard
Walter de Grauncort
Robert de Grendon
Simon de Grenhull
Adam de Greynvill
Hugh Gubiun
Thomas de Hakeford
Richard de Harle
Richard de Harsleye
John de Haulton
Hamo Hauteyn
Robert de Hampton
John de Haward
William Hecham
Edmund de Hemgrave
Robert Hereward
John de Houby
Robert de Insula or d'Isle
William de Insula or d'Isle
Robert fitz John
William de Kerdeston
Gilbert de Kirkeby
John de Kirkeby
Bogo de Knovill
Richard de Knut
Leofwin fitz Leofwin
Hamo Lestrange
John Lestrange of Ercole
Roger Lestrange
John de Lythegreynes
Peter de Lymesy
Hugh de Manneby
Philip Marmyun
William de Mere
Thomas fitz Michael
Roger Minot
Hugh de Mortuo Mari or Mortimer
Ralph de Mortuo Mari or Mortimer
John le Moigne or le Moyne
Giles de Mounpinzoun
Robert de Nevill
Almaric de Nodariis or Nowers
Robert de Norton
Walter Opton or Upton
Simon de Pateshull
John de Plessetis or Plessey
William de Redham
Richer de Refham
Alan de Retheby
William de Roinges or Rothyng
William de Rungeton
William Rydel
Urian de St. Pierre or Peter
Thomas de St. Omero or Omer
Ralph de Shirle
Nicholas le Scot
John Sefoul
Henry de Segrave
John de Seyton
Roger de Seyton
John de Sheffield
Walter Selfhanger
Nicholas Spink
Roger Springheuse
Hervey de Stanho
William de Sutton
Adam de Swynburn
William de Swayneford
Luke Taleboys
John de Thorp
Thomas de Tittele
William de Tittele
Robert de Trillec
Roger Tromewyn
John de Vallibus or Vaux
Robert de Veer
Thomas Wale
Eustace de Watford
John de Wytlebury
John de Wylughby
Alen la Zusche
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