The Ever Dear Mr. Dobbs: ROYAL GOVERNOR ARTHUR DOBBS, 1689-1765
by Susan Block

In 1754, 65-year-old Arthur Dobbs came to eastern North Carolina from picturesque Carrickfergus in County Antrim, Northern Ireland. At the age at which most men retire, he left his waterfront castle, much of his family, and a peripatetic international career behind to move to a land where he would experience mosquitoes, heat indices, alligators, and many two-legged obstacles. He spent much of his geriatric time and energy on the cause of immigration and the surnames of his friends and those dangling on his own expansive family tree provide important clues to the time and inclination of many of the Lower Cape Fear families’ embarkment from the old country to the new. Perhaps a gnawing professional boredom drove Arthur Dobbs to emigrate. Maybe it was a desire to anesthetize the pain he felt in mourning the death of his wife of 28 years. It is hard to think that he was not also lured by the opportunity to govern and people a province in which he already owned approximately 1,300,000 acres of land.

Arthur Dobbs, the son of Richard Dobbs and Mary Stewart Dobbs, was born 2 April 1689. Both the Dobbs and Stewart families had moved from Scotland to Northern Ireland or Ulster in the 1500’s. John Dobbs, Arthur's great-great grandfather, had arrived in Carrickfergus in 1596 as an army officer and ended up marrying an heiress named Margaret Dalway. He settled comfortably into life in their newly built castle on the Dalway estate and served as Mayor of Carrickfergus and High Sheriff of County Antrim.

Subsequent members of Arthur Dobbs' line continued to hold public office and develop land north of Carrickfergus. They were staunch members of the Church of Ireland, the established Anglican body.
Arthur's father, Richard Dobbs, Jr. was a second son due to inherit little of his father's considerable estate until his older brother, John, became a Quaker and was immediately disinherit and driven from the castle. Richard married Mary Stewart, a cousin who shared with him an ancestral line which travelled by way of Alexander the Wolf of Badenoch straight back to King Robert Bruce of Scotland. Richard became part of what was now a family tradition and served as mayor of Carrickfergus. The young couple quickly settled into a comfortable lifestyle and became known for their elegant taste and extensive collection of books. A frequent guest in their commodious library was Jonathan Swift, the author of *Gulliver's Travels*, who referred in his writings to Richard as "Squire Dobbs." Swift was a young parish minister at the time and his church consisted almost entirely of members of the Dobbs family. Swift would later become the Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin.¹

In March of 1689 just as Mary Stewart Dobbs was counting down the weeks until their first child was due to be born, Ireland became a warring ground for the two English kings, James II, a Catholic, and William of Orange, a Protestant. It was not the first or last tragic war in Ireland waged in the name of religious interpretation but fought for the cause of power. Richard Dobbs, Jr. was appointed Captain of the County Antrim Association, a Protestant organization loyal to William and determined to overthrow newly established Catholic rule in Belfast and Carrickfergus. Afraid for their lives, Richard sent his pregnant wife across the Irish Sea to the coastal Scottish village of Girvan in Ayrshire where her son, Arthur, was born “on Tuesday morning being ye 2 of April 1689.”²

Back in Ireland, the new father was leading an unsuccessful but bold attack against Catholic forces under the command of Col. Thomas Maxwell. A few months later 10,000 Williamite troops landed at Belfast and enabled the Protestants to defeat James II’s army in Belfast and Carrickfergus. On 14 June 1590, William of Orange visited Carrickfergus where he was officially welcomed and lauded in a speech given by Richard Dobbs, Sr., Arthur’s grandfather.

Mary and little Arthur returned to Ireland after peace was restored. Richard and Mary Dobbs had several more children: Jane, Elizabeth, and Richard. Richard was the only one to survive childhood. He grew up to be a renowned cleric and professor at Trinity College in Dublin. Jonathan Swift said that he was one of the three most worthy ministers in Ireland. An extensive collection of his writings is housed in the Trinity College Library.

Arthur Dobbs’ mother died when he was still a boy and his father then married Margaret Clugston of Belfast. With Margaret, Richard Dobbs had three daughters: Margaret who married George Spaight, Mary who married Andrew Boyd of Ballymoney, and Ann-Helena who became Mrs. William Kerr.

When Arthur Dobbs was twenty-two years old, he purchased a cornetcy in the Dragoons and had just been sent to Scotland when word came that his father had died. Arthur inherited the entire estate and returned home to manage it and help look after his half-sisters. Arthur married Anne Osburn Norbury 12 May 1790. He had just been named Deputy Governor of Carrickfergus by his patron, Lord Conway when Anne gave birth to their first child: Conway Richard. Arthur Dobbs was also carrying out his duties as High Sheriff of County Antrim, Mayor of Carrickfergus and a member of the Irish Parliament. But his responsibilities as a busy public servant did not satisfy the restless nature of his mind and intense curiosity led him to study astronomy, meteorology, commerce, exploration, religion and botany.³
In the late 1720's, Arthur Dobbs began to write copiously. He recorded his thoughts and remarkably detailed observations in numerous wordy papers with titles like "Essay upon the Grand Plan of Providence and Dissertations Annexed Thereto," "A Short Essay to Shew the Expediency, if not political Necessity of an Incorporating Union betwixt Britain and Ireland," and "An Account of an Eclipse of the Moon at Castle Dobbs near Carrickfergus in Ireland, 2nd February 1728/29." Many of Dobbs' writings housed at the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland in Belfast are also available on microfilm in the Southern Historical Collection of Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina. They reflect an author just as fascinated with the everyday activities of a honeybee as he was with the details of international trade.

From 1730 until 1752, Arthur Dobbs' world expanded as his interest in and writings concerning Irish trade won him new influential friends. He was named Engineer-in-Chief and Surveyor-General of Ireland. He supervised the building of a new Parliament House and many public Georgian style buildings. He won the ear of members of the English Parliament and Prime Minister Robert Walpole as he argued for increased trade with North America and warned against French Expansionism. When he criticized the Hudson Bay Company endeavor and promoted the idea of a second expedition to discover a North-West Passage to India and China, the British government backed him. Though no passage was ever discovered, important information was gathered for cartographers and a portion of headland was named Cape Dobbs.

In 1745, Arthur Dobbs began purchasing large parcels of land in North Carolina including half of Mecklenburg and Cabarrus counties. An old friend, Matthew Rowan from County Antrim, had become the Surveyor-General of the Colony and Dobbs' trust in him as agent led to a massive accumulation of property bought sight-unseen. Arthur Dobbs did not get much encouragement to visit his properties from friend, William Parke, in Wilmington. "I heard you had thought of seeing this country this year yourself, but I fear this settlement is yet too much in its infancy to give you much satisfaction and the accommodations in many parts so bad... The fall is the best time, October particularly and your arrival just to that time is precarious in so long a voyage. Your lands on the Black River would be very fit for shucor. A number of the settlers meet with disappointment and are unhappy. Most here are farmers, either Irish or German. The Germans are frugal and industrious and not so ready to complain."

In 1747, just as Dobbs began working on brave new policies aimed at settling Ulster-Scots throughout North Carolina, his beloved wife Anne died unexpectedly. He was deeply affected by her death and accomplished little for the next three years.

By 1750, Arthur Dobbs had returned to his writing desk and penned "Concerning Bees and Their Methods of Gathering Wax and Honey" for the Royal Society. In that same year, he joined John Hanbury to form the Ohio Company of Virginia, an organization dedicated to promoting British influence in the colonies. By April 1751, Dobbs was chartering ships for the transportation of skilled Irishmen to America. In 1752, when North Carolina Governor Gabriel Johnston died, the British crown looked to Arthur Dobbs as a natural successor. He spent the Christmas season in Bath, England and sat there for William Hoare to paint the only known portrait of him. It depicts the well-dressed, wigged gentleman holding a map of North Carolina in one hand and a compass in the other. The original hangs today in Castle Dobbs, Carrickfergus but a copy of the portrait is owned by the National Society of the Colonial Dames in the State of North Carolina and is on permanent display in the library of the Burgwin-Wright House in Wilmington. The house that John Burgwin built is an appropriate showplace for the painting because through Arthur Dobbs' patronage John Burgwin served as Treasurer of the Province, Clerk of the New Hanover County Superior Court, and private secretary to the Governor.

True to his portrait, he did accept the Governorship of North Carolina. He spent the early months of 1754 in Ireland modifying and approving plans for a new castle, putting his personal affairs in order, and placing his estate in the hands of his son Conway Dobbs. He also arranged immediate passage for a surveyor, several neighbors, and the Reverend Alexander Stewart, a cousin recruited to be minister to the Dobbs family. Then in June, he embarked with his son Edward Brice Dobbs, nephew Richard Spaight, several canons, a thousand muskets, and a printer on a very rough twelve week crossing to Hampton, Virginia. 4

On 12 December 1754 Dobbs spoke in New Bern at his first North Carolina Assembly meeting. His opening recommendation may have startled assemblymen...

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2 Clarke, p. 15, quoting from a Dobbs family Bible.

3 Trinity College Library, Special Collections, Dublin, Ireland. Curious in Everything, p. 32.
expecting to hear first of matters of commerce and the growing French and Indian problem.

"The first and greatest principle and the foundation of all social happiness is the knowledge of true religion, and the practice of true morality and virtue, to know, love and adore the Divine Being as we ought and to obey the precepts he has revealed to us, so I think it is my duty in the first place to recommend to you the providing of a proper fund to support a sufficient number of learned pious clergymen to reside in the Province." 5

The remainder of his address aptly prefaced the eleven years he would spend as Royal Governor of North Carolina. He recommended ardent loyalty to the King and benevolence and education for native Americans. He requested provisions for promoting trade and industry, passionately denounced the French or "invaders," and proposed measures by which the province might better defend itself. His audience, a group with a growing reputation for sharp, fruitless argument, received him warmly and expressed their hopes that the benevolent gentleman of the world would bring unity to the discordant governing body.

There was no fixed seat for the Assembly. Their moving from place to place annoyed Governor Dobbs and New Bern made him actually feel ill. After traveling many times throughout North Carolina, he finally found a spot that interested him. In 1758, he purchased a modest 55 acre plantation in Brunswick for five shillings and one peppercorn and moved with his array of servants into Russellborough which he soon renamed Castle Dobbs.

The Governor busied himself with providing a quota of troops from the Province to fight in the French and Indian War, supervising the building of forts and defensive outposts, starting a silk industry, encouraging the cultivation of hemp and flaxseed, setting up a postal service, encouraging printing, and seeking to modify Navigation Acts so that America could trade more freely with Ireland, Spain, and Portugal.

None of these serious responsibilities could keep Governor Dobbs from his lifelong study of nature. He could be seen in Brunswick following bees to chart their flight, recording the weather, and frequently getting down on his hands and knees to peer at vegetation he had never seen in Ulster. On 2 April 1758, his seventieth birthday, he wrote to English naturalist Peter Collinson of a new hyperactive plant he had found on his land.

"...I have taken a little plantation at the sound on the sea coast. We have a kind of a Catch Fly Sensitive which closes upon anything that touches it. It grows in the Latitude 34 but not in 35. I will try to save the seed here. Your most humble servant, Arthur Dobbs." Edward Dobbs hand-delivered his father's letter to Collinson during the summer of 1759 thus informing the European world for the first time of the Venus Flytrap.

Venus' Fly Trap (Dionaea muscipula), engraving by James Roberts 1768. (Curious in Everything, 1990)

Peter Collinson wrote to the famous Philadelphia naturalist John Bartram of the plant with the "iron spring fox trap," as Dobbs had termed it. John Bartram's son, William, came to Wilmington to live for a while and when he returned, he took a Venus Flytrap to his father who made sketches of it. Collinson wrote many letters to Wilmington requesting a live plant but it was nine years before a live Brunswick County Venus Flytrap arrived in London. John Ellis, an eminent London naturalist and another friend of Dobbs', had drawings made of the plant for The St. James's Chronicle. It was also Ellis who came up with the scientific name for what had quickly become known in London as the Tippitywich: Dionaea Muscipula.

In 1762, at the age of 73, Governor Dobbs remarried. Unfortunately, in the eyes of many amateur historians, that one “I do” would eclipse a multitude of truly

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4 Castle Dobbs Papers, Reel 2, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina. Clarke, pp. 222-223. Colonial Records, v. VI, p. 493. Curious in Everything, p. 33. Note: The printing press Dobbs brought to North Carolina was probably the same one used by Andrew Stewart, a cousin of Dobbs', and later sold to Adam Boyd, another distant Dobbs relative who published The Cape Fear Mercury. (See LCFS Bulletin XXXVIII, 1.) Many of Dobbs' relatives, especially his son and nephew, received enviable appointments and privileges leading one critic to write, "Dobbs is determined to elbow out anybody in a Place of Trust to make room for his relatives." (A History of Carrickfergus, PRONT.

5 Colonial Records of North Carolina, v. V, p. 213. Dobbs' picture of the ideal clergyman included Anglican vestments. His Anglican friend, the Rev. James Reed of New Bern, wrote in 1760: "The anabaptists are obstinate, illiterate and grossly ignorant, the Methodists ignorant, censorious and uncharitable, the Quakers rigid, but the Presbyterians are pretty moderate except here and there a bigot or rigid Calvinist. As for papists, I cannot learn there are above nine or ten in the whole county. I have estimated the number of infidels and heathen to be about 1,000." (Society for the Propogation of the Gospel Collection, North Carolina Archives.)
remarkable events in his long life. He had been a widower for fifteen years so the time lapse was not improper. He married the daughter of an eminent colonial family so it seemed a decent match. It was just the fact that she was only fifteen years old that stirred up enough conversation to last over two centuries. Even the dry pages of the Colonial Records contain an irreverent letter about the man of “baneful influence who grew stupidly enamored with Miss Davis, a lovely lady of sprightly fifteen.”

Despite the 58 year age discrepancy, it appears that it was a tender, loving marriage. He referred to her as “my dear Jessy” and she called him “my ever dear Mr. Dobbs.” She nursed him back to health after he suffered a stroke and consolled him as he grieved for his nephew, Richard Spaight. She was packing their belongings for a voyage back to Ireland when an attending physician informed Governor Dobbs that “he had better prepare himself for a much longer voyage.” Two days later, on 28 March 1765, Arthur Dobbs died in Justina’s arms. He was buried on the grounds of St. Phillip’s, a Brunswick church he founded, in an unmarked grave.

Justina wrote to Conway Dobbs in Carrickfergus: “The melancholy Subject that gives ociation for my writing to you effects me so much that I hardly know what I write. Alas I have lost my ever Dear Mr. Dobbs which makes me almost inconsolable, he went to the Fort with Lord Adam Gordon on a Party of Pleasure and Caught a violent cold and after a few days illness departed this life the 28th of last March he died in his senses the violence of his disorder made him delirious at Times but when his reason beam’d out his serenity of minde resigned himself up to his Heavenly Father with

that nobleness of soul which few can equal. I have lost one of the best and tenderest of husbands and you a kind and most affectionate father. I console you on so great a loss ... I once flattered myself with the pleasing expectation of seeing you in company with my dear Mr. Dobbs, but the Divine power of Events otherwise determined it.”

Justina then signed the letter to her stepson who was nineteen years older than she, “yr affectionate Mother, Justina Dobbs.”

Justina Davis Dobbs married in later years Abner Nash and thus became the only woman known to have married two North Carolina governors.

The legacy left to North Carolina by Arthur Dobbs is as hard to define as the man himself. It is difficult to quantify connections, encouragement, and economic goodwill. Balance sheets do not exist to document the difference Dobbs made to several local family fortunes. No one will ever actually count how many times the name “Wilmington” appears in historical archives scattered all over the British Isles because of Dobbs’ work as a self-appointed transatlantic chamber of commerce. Most of all, because so few records were kept and many that were have been lost, we can never number the people living today in the Lower Cape Fear area whose ancestors came to North Carolina because Dobbs asked, prodded, or enticed them to move. In his multifaceted role, Royal Governor Arthur Dobbs was to the area what a truly great teacher is to a student: transforming but immeasurable.

POSTSCRIPT

During the summer of 1993 my husband, Fred, and I made a trip to Northern Ireland. I wanted to see Carrickfergus and other points in County Antrim where many of my ancestors are buried and from which at least one emigrated at the bidding of Arthur Dobbs.

Since Carrickfergus is a small town, we made plans to stay a few miles away in Belfast at a hotel which did not match the names of any we knew to be frequent bombing targets. We found when we arrived that there is no safe haven in Belfast and the hotel we chose had just recently been renamed to increase bookings since by its old name it had been bombed on several occasions. The grounds of the hotel were fenced and along the top of the fence ran spiral coils of barbed wire. The only way in was through a steel gate that could only be opened by a uniformed guard. There were seldom more than three

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or four people in the hotel restaurant and the lobby was as quiet as a mausoleum.

On every block of downtown Belfast we saw the same barbed wire treatment. In addition, many of the buildings had corrugated steel in front of each window. There were very few people on the streets and they were walking hurriedly to their destinations. As we entered a bus station, we saw city workers sweeping up glass and carting away debris. I asked a policeman what had happened. “Bomb,” was all he said.

![Belfast, 1993](image)

There were literally thousands of British soldiers in Belfast. Each wore camouflage fatigues and held an index finger on the trigger of an uzi gun. I asked our driver if it would be alright for me to snap a photograph of one of the soldiers. He replied, “The best that can happen is that they will stop us and interrogate you. The worst is that some of them are a little jittery and they just might shoot you.” I waited until we were some distance away and took one picture with a zoom lens.

Our bus stopped in the middle of town and a policewoman got on with a baton in her hand. It was some sort of bomb-detecting device and she went down the aisle of the bus pointing it back and forth until she was satisfied that the vehicle was safe. We were transported to a train station where we boarded a rickety car for Carrickfergus. Young boys threw rocks at the windows of the train as we left the outskirts of Belfast.

Carrickfergus was a study in contrast though as an ebullient eleven year old boy with blond hair and a gold earring volunteered to walk us from the train station to the Dobbins Inn. It was there that we had arranged to meet Charles McConnell, a retired gentleman who is the leading local historian or antiquarian as they call it. Even though it was August, the weather was cold and the coffee we drank as we got acquainted tasted good. At first it was difficult to understand his pronounced Irish accent and I was distracted by the typically Irish way in which he ended a sentence by raising his voice a half octave or so on the last syllable. But soon my ears adjusted and I began to understand what he was saying. The Dobbins Inn, a charming pudgy white hotel, was really a small sixteenth century castle with thirty inch walls and turrets still intact.

We began a walking tour along the sidewalks made of large stone blocks and encountered a rather inebriated old Irishman who, after studying us and our camera for a few moments, muttered, “Tourists. We have tourists again.”

The dates of things in Carrickfergus were staggeringly old. The city gate which two cars could barely squeeze through at the same time was erected in 1100. We wandered up the street and watched an excavation where an archaeologist gently placed a lady’s pin he had just unearthed in my hand. It was approximately 450 years old and still had mud on it.

I was happy when we finally got to St. Nicholas Church in the center of town for it was the church where my family, the Stewarts, had worshipped ten generations ago. It was also the church home of many Dobs family members. It is a Norman stone structure that dates from the thirteenth century and is unique in that it has a clock face on its wide steeple, somewhat like an arm wearing a watch. The church contains both the earliest stained glass window in Ireland and the most famous. The oldest is a large window depicting the baptism of Christ. The most famous and frequently photographed one is a window dedicated to St. Nicholas. The first two panels depict St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra as the patron saint of sailors and the benefactor of the poor. The third, approved by an indulgent vestry, pictures him as Santa Claus in his reindeer drawn sleigh.

Mr. McConnell explained that part of the flooring of the church had recently been removed for repairs. They had always known that several clergymen had been buried under the chancel. During the excavation, they not only found the crypts, but also discovered a small plaque on one that read: “You may as well walk over me now. You did when I was alive.”

Other more serious marble memorials adorned the walls of the church. One read, “Arthur Frederick Dobbs of Castle Dobbs - 1876-1955.” Another next to it was dedicated to my great-times-seven grandfather whose son was the Reverend Alexander Stewart who came to North Carolina to be minister to the Dobbs household. The Reverend Stewart was a cousin of Arthur Dobbs and according to family tradition was the cleric who presided at Dobbs’ infamous second wedding. Stewart, who was a graduate of Trinity College in Dublin, also served from 1754 until 1771 as the minister of St. Thomas Church in Bath, North Carolina, the oldest church in the state. The Bath parish was a tough one at
the time for it involved water travel to seven different chapels. But some things about Alexander Stewart were probably tough for his parishioners to take as well.

Maybe there was some genetic quirk of the heart for, like Arthur Dobbs, certain aspects of his married life were not very conventional. The Reverend Mr. Stewart was wed five times. One of his betrothed was Penelope Johnston, Governor Gabriel Johnston's niece. His last wife was said to be “the young Miss Hobbs.”

His business activities invited comment as well when he began making what some of his flock considered too much money buying and selling real estate. His connections to Dobbs fostered accusations of nepotism and there may indeed have been some insider trading going on.

Whatever else, his commitment to the church was resolute. He spent his own money hiring teachers and buying books to equip a school for the Indians and African Americans at Mattamuskeet. He was known to sail in winter eight miles in an open boat to visit the sick. He wrote a flurry of descriptive letters which are still on file in London and one book entitled The Validity of Infant Baptism as an Anglican defense to the criticism of the Anabaptists. Six years after the death of Arthur Dobbs, Alexander Stewart died as a result of injuries received during a hurricane and was buried under the church in Bath. His Pamlico River plantation is now the site of a Texas Gulf phosphate mining operation.

It was a moving experience to be in St. Nicholas Church and to be lost in thought about ancient ancestors and a sense of place. Soon though our guide’s melodic voice brought me back to the present reality but not before it passed through my mind that if Arthur Dobbs had not enticed my ancestor to North Carolina, I might also speak with an Irish lilt.

The next day Mr. McConnell carried us to a small area of Carrickfergus known as Boney before to see the Andrew Jackson Centre. President Jackson’s parents lived in Boney before prior to their immigration to Charleston. Almost before we had a chance to speak, the jocular docent gently chided the American practice of referring to Scottish lowlanders who moved to Northern Ireland as Scotch Irish. “Ulster Scot is the proper term,” he said. The center consists of a one story house similar to what many of the 20,000 of those Ulster Scots who emigrated to America in the 1760’s would have left behind. It was very stark and cold and damp and living there would have made it easier to face a dangerous sea voyage and life on a frontier.

Our final stop of the day was Castle Dobbs. My husband and I had arranged to meet Sir Richard and Lady Dobbs before we left Wilmington. Mr. McConnell had volunteered to drive us to the castle which is just a few miles outside of Carrickfergus. We stopped by his house to pick up his wife. The two of them had never been to Castle Dobbs either and they were very excited about the prospect of seeing what they had only heard of for so long.

The castle Arthur Dobbs helped design but never saw is as large as many government buildings in Washington, D.C. It sits on a hill overlooking the Irish Sea. Typical of the area, there is no shrubbery around the house at all. The front facade alone contains 42 windows, most of them large. The central portion is a three-story structure with six bedrooms on the top floor. In addition, there are two tremendous two-story L-shaped wings. Sir Richard and Lady Dobbs met us at the front door and ushered us to a drawing room upstairs where prominently displayed on the northern wall was the original portrait of Governor Arthur Dobbs. The Smithsonian Institute has made many offers to purchase it, but judging by the Dobbs’ pride in the picture, it would seem that it will be hanging on the castle wall for a very long time. There were many other family portraits around the room. There was also a full size pipe organ.

Sir Richard was educated in England and speaks with an aristocratic British accent. His bright eyes and gentle laughter belie the fact that he is the Queen’s representative in a war zone. Like most of the Dobbs men who have occupied the castle, he is a lawyer by profession. Lady Dobbs is a charming woman who gardens seriously in a horticultural showplace on the castle grounds. They have three grown children, the eldest of whom is named Conway.

The Dobbs walked us through the garden and around the grounds. Sir Richard showed us the shell of an old castle built by one of the Dalways in the year 900. Ivy climbs up its walls and roses bloom around its foundation. He also pointed out the site of the castle that Governor Dobbs ordered demolished so that his new castle would have a better view of the water.

It really is quite a view. The grass is very green in Ireland. It is the bright green of a construction paper shamrock. It is a green so bright that when you fly in, it seems it was meant as a rustic navigational aid. Castle Dobbs has an enormous sloping yard of ancient oaks and of that very green grass that ends only when it reaches the ice blue Irish Sea.

We sadly said our goodbyes and headed back for our last night in Belfast. We were anxious to get there before dark. After riding in a car, train, and bus, we walked the final block to the hotel. About half way there, we heard machine gun fire close by. Late that night, I watched the local television news. There had been an “incident” and soldiers had shot warning rounds into the air. That same day there had also been an IRA related murder. But the scariest news item of all was that a 2300 pound bomb had been disarmed near our hotel while we were at Castle Dobbs. “It was successfully deactivated…” The hush of it might be the world’s loudest sound. I went to sleep that night with the covers pulled over my head.
Family tree of Arthur Dobbs (Curious in Everything, 1990)