

Title:	The Clopton Charter, c.1241, n.d.		
Creator:	De Clopton, Robert		
Dates of Material:	c.1241, n.d.	Record Group Number:	RG 391
Summary of Contents:	<p>Clopton Charter attached to wax seal 2 photocopied colour photos of the seal 5 coloured photos (3 of the charter and seal and 2 of the seal) 1 12 page document entitled <i>A thirteenth-century English charter at Brock University</i>- a 2 page translation of the charter is attached to this document 1 page transcription of the charter by Angus Somerville 1 page translation of the charter</p>		
Physical Description / Condition:	<p>The charter's dimensions are 11 by 25 cm. at the widest, but the left side is cut on an angle from head to foot so the measurement at the bottom corners is 23.8 cm. wide. There are eleven unruled lines of text written in a crisp Gothic cursive belonging to the thirteenth century. The seal is exceptionally well preserved and attached by a tag of parchment 2.1 cm wide threaded through a single slit 2.3 cm wide and 1.4 cm from the foot of the document. Looking at the front of the charter, the length of the tag is 1.5 cm. From the back, the strip of parchment runs 2.6 cm. Two strands of parchment extend from the bottom of the seal; these are 5 cm long and 1.8 cm wide. Both sides are equal in measurement. The left strand has a tear of about half its width near the seal but is still holding. The single-sided seal, made of green wax and measuring 4 cm in diameter, bears the legend SIGILL[UM] ROBERTI DE C[L]OPTUN, and the image of a bird, possibly a dove, facing to the right and sitting on a branch. An endorsement in a later hand on the back of the parchment reads: <i>Quieta clamacio Roberti Clopton Willelmo filio suo de una virgate terre.</i> (Quitclaim of Robert Clopton to William his son of one virgate of land).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Taken from "A thirteenth-century English charter at Brock University" by A. Basson, R.A. McDonald, D. Sharron, and A. Somerville</i></p> <p>1 (29 x 37 cm) box</p>		

**Administrative/
Biographical
Sketch**

This document is a classic example of a medieval charter, a legal document recording the conveyance of lands or rights that constitutes an extremely important class of evidence for historians of the middle ages. Charters narrated or recorded a gift or grant, but did not actually convey property; the conveyance itself was a public ceremony.

Angus Somerville: Transcription of XIIIth century charter: Brock Library

Sciant praesentes et futuri quod ego Robertus de Clopton dedi et concessi et haec carta mea confirmavi Willelmo filio meo unam virgatam terre quod est de territorio Clopton cum omnibus pertinentiis suis pro homagio et servitio suo. Illam scilicet virgatam terre quam Heriotam quondam tenuit. habendam et tenendam sibi et heredibus suis libere et quiete in feudo et hereditate de me et heredibus meis. reddendo inde annuatim duodecim denarios argenti, ad duos terminos anni, ad festum Sancti Michaeli sex denarios, ad festum Sancte Marie in Marcio sex denarios pro omni servitio ad me vel ad heredes meos pertinente, salva forinseco servitio; cum omnibus rebus et libertatibus ad praedictam t[er]ram pertinentibus in pratis et paschuis et in omnibus rebus quae ad dictam virgatam terre pertinent. et ego Robertus et heredes mei totam praedictam virgatam terre cum omnibus pertinentiis suis dicto Willelmo et heredibus suis contra omnes gentes warrantizabimus in perpetuum. ut autem haec mea donatio et concessio firma et stabilis permaneat hoc scriptum sigilli mei impressione roboravi hiis testibus domino Willelmo de Ludinton, domino Roberto de Valle militibus. Willelmo de Edricheston, Willelmo de Waleford, Roberto de Sidesam Ricardo de Ludinton Nicholo clerico et aliis.

Warwickshire names:

Edricheston now Edstone

Ludin[g]ton

Sidesham

Etc.

Translation of Clopton Charter

Let those who are present and those in futureⁱ know that I Robert de Clopton gave and granted to my son, William, one yardlandⁱⁱ which is part of the Clopton estateⁱⁱⁱ / manorial demesne with all its appurtenances in exchange for his homage and service^{iv}, and that I have confirmed it with this charter^v. The yardland in question is that which he once held as heriot / heritable property^{vi}. [I have given and granted it to him] to be held and kept by him and his heirs freely and undisputedly^{vii} as a holding granted in return for services and as hereditary property from me and my heirs. For this he has to pay an annual rent of twelve silver pennies, in two installments per year: six on the Feast Day of St. Michael and six on the Feast Day of St. Mary in March^{viii}, on

the income^{ix} that belongs to me and to my heirs, without neglecting income from elsewhere; together with all goods and privileges attached to the aforementioned land in the form of fields and pastures and everything which belongs to said yardland. And I, Robert, and all my heirs shall warrant all this aforementioned yardland together with all its appurtenances to said William and his heirs against all other claims in perpetuity^x. However, in order that this gift and grant of mine may remain firm and immovable, I have validated this charter with my seal in the presence of [the following] witnesses: the knights Sir^{xi} William of Ludinton [and] Sir Robert of Valle. William of Edricheston, William of Waleford, Robert of Sidesam, Richard of Ludinton, Nicholas the scribe^{xii}, and others.

¹ *futuri*: lit. 'those who are to come'

¹ *virgatum terre = virgatum terrae* (class. Latin): a not unusual term in medieval Latin; it can also be translated as 'square measure [of land].'

¹ *territorio*: 'cultivated / arable land,' 'manor,' 'estate.'

¹ *homagio et servitio*: the two words sometimes combine in a *terminus technicus*, e.g. *de hominiatico (=homagio) ac de potestate et servitio et de fidelitate semper teneant* (from a twelfth century document).

¹ For the sake of a more idiomatic translation, I have changed the original word order somewhat in the English.

¹ *Heriotam*: probably not a proper name; *heriotum*, on the other hand, refers in twelfth century England (its earliest attestation) to some kind of legal agreement between lord and tenant regarding manorial tenure. However, my translation may still require some adjustment.

¹ Interesting medieval meaning of the classical Latin adverb *quiete*, already found as early as the twelfth century.

¹ *in Marcio*: an expression I took to mean 'in March' and referring to the month of the divine conception (i.e. nine months before December); taken as a proper name, which is the standard classical meaning, *Marcus* does not make sense here otherwise.

¹ *servitio* here as well as in the phrase *salva forinseco servitio* seems to refer to something concrete, and therefore in a slightly different sense than in the phrase *homagio et servitio*. In medieval Latin, the word can also mean *inter alia*, 'food supply from estates on which the sustenance of the lord's household depends' or 'purchase price paid for a grant.' See, J.F. Niedermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, Leiden 1976, s.v.

¹ *contra omnes gentes warrantizabimus in perpetuum*: a very conventional phrase in this kind of document; another example can be found in a royal charter from twelfth century England. In any case, *warrantizare* seems to have been far more common than I originally thought!

¹ 'Lord' is another translation possibility for 'domino.' I was not sure when the title Sir was introduced in medieval England.

¹ *clerico*: can also mean 'clerk' (in the religious sense), 'monk' or 'scholar.'

Location:	Brock University Archives
Source Information:	<p>In the fall of 2008, staff of the Special Collections and Archives of the James A. Gibson Library at Brock University in St. Catharines discovered a small, tightly folded, and clearly very old parchment document in a bag in the bottom drawer of a filing cabinet. The document, which had been transferred to the Library from the President's Office in 1976, was stored without being catalogued, probably because it fell beyond the scope of the department's collection policy. It remained unexamined for over thirty years until early in 2009, when announcement of its "rediscovery" caused considerable excitement among Brock University and Niagara communities.</p> <p><i>Taken from "A thirteenth-century English charter at Brock University" by A. Basson, R.A. McDonald, D. Sharron, and A. Somerville</i></p>
Subject Headings:	600 1 De Clopton, Robert 600 1 De Clopton, William 650 0 Manuscripts, Medieval zEngland 651 1 Great Britain xHistory y13th century 700 1 Basson, R.A. 700 1 MacDonald, R. Andrew (Russell Andrew), 1965- 700 1 Sharron, David Mark 700 1 Somerville, Angus A.
Added Entries:	
Related material held at other repositories:	Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon England : Clopton Charters The National Archives
Described by:	Anne Adams
Date:	April 13, 2012

