

Home > Forum > Surnames > Garner

RICHARD GARNER OF SHREWSBURY, ENGLAND, FATHER OF JOHN GARNER OF VIRGINIA

By [Patrick Garner](#) May 26, 2010 at 01:17:03

This is an update on what I have learned regarding Richard Garner of Shrewsbury to date. I am indebted to David Austerberry, a fellow member of the Shropshire Family History Society, for providing me with the complete Gardner extracts from the unpublished parish registers of St. Alkmund's and St. Julian's. (I already had those from St. Mary's and St. Chad's) He also gave me his expertise on the Shrewsbury Gardners from whom he believes our Richard descends and why.

Let me say at the outset that I am convinced that the original surname was Gardiner and that family members and record keepers were simply inconsistent in its spelling. (The illiteracy of many of our ancestors contributed to this.) Thus, we have various members of the same family or descent recorded as Gardiner, Gardener, Gardner, Gardnor, Garner, Garnar, etc. One example of this phenomena are the St. Chad baptismal records of the children of John and Elizabeth Garner, who were contemporaries of our Richard (and probably related). They had thirteen children, of whom eleven survived. With two exceptions, both parents' names were entered in each baptismal record. Of the thirteen records, the name is rendered "Garner" in eleven, "Gardner" in one, and "Gardiner" in three. Another example: in John Garner of Virginia's 1702 will, his name was rendered as "Garner", but that of his wife Susanna, the executor, and that of his grandson William, a witness, were rendered as "Gardner".

After examining the records of all four parishes, it is evident that there were only two Richard Gardners living in Shrewsbury in the opening decades of the 17th century:

One was the Richard Gardner of St. Chad's parish, who was married to Katherine and whose son John was baptized in that parish in 1634. He may have been the father of another John who was baptized and buried in St.

Julian's church in 1632. Richard has no baptismal record, as the St. Chad registers prior to 1616 have not survived. His lineage no doubt lies in those missing registers. He and his family disappear from the registers after the sole entry of the 1634 christening of his son.

The other Richard Gardner was a dyer and innkeeper of St. Mary's parish. He was the son of a John Gardner and the grandson of Richard Gardiner, the dyer of Frankwell. His ancestry is outlined in Herald's Visitation to Shropshire 1623. After 1623, we have the baptismal records of his three daughters: Mary (1636), Sarah (1638) and Mary (1644). He also had a daughter named Elizabeth who died in 1641, but have only her burial record. These are all in the St. Mary's parish registers. That he was their father, is also attested to in the Gardner pedigree by James Lawson and another Gardner pedigree prepared by Rev. Fletcher which I recently acquired from the Shropshire Archives. The Richard Gardner of St. Mary's parish died in Shrewsbury in 1646.

As the vital records of Richard's parents, siblings, and immediate forebears are probably lost with the missing St. Chad registers, I had to look for other records to find what information may exist about him and his ancestry. One advantage I had in evaluating any records I may find is that the Richard Gardner of St. Mary's parish was apprenticed in the Drapers Company in 1605, near or before the time when Richard Gardner of St. Chad's parish would have reasonably been born. Apprenticeships were typically entered in one's teens, which means that the Richard of St. Mary's was substantially older than the Richard of St. Chad's. Thus, the dating of a record would determine which of these two Richards it referred to.

I have found two records whose chronology would only fit the Richard of St. Chad's, not the Richard of St. Mary's:

The first is the admission of a Richard Gardener to the Shrewsbury School 13 December 1619. Among the Gardners who enrolled in the 16th and early 17th century, he is the only Richard. He was admitted into the third form (the lowest). The successful student was expected to progress to the first form before he left the school. The enrollment age in the Tudor period ranged from 6 to 17 years of age, with 10/11 being the average. His enrollment fee was 4 pence - not very much. This indicates that he was the son of a burgess of Shrewsbury town. This information (as well the data for

all the Gardner enrollees for the period) was provided by Mike Morrrough, the archivist for the Shrewsbury School.

The second record was an apprenticeship list. Since many of the Shrewsbury Gardners were Drapers, I looked online for any evidence that our Richard was a member of that Company. The only Richard mentioned in the Drapers records I was able to find was the one of St. Mary's parish. However, I found an apprentice record for what appears to be our Richard in a book called Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, Vol. IV, 1881. (google books) The chapter on "The Guilds of Shrewsbury" by Rev. W.A. Leighton contains excerpts from the records of the "Companie of Taylers and Skinners in the Town of Salop", including the apprenticeship lists. On page 230 is the following entry, the only Gardners on the list:

1621 Nov. 22. Richard Gardner s. of George Gardner of Shrewsbury deceased to Roger Cocke. (departed without freedom).

The date is the date of indenture, that is, the date Richard entered into his apprenticeship. This tells us that his father was named George, who was "of Shrewsbury", i.e. a burgess of the town and who had died by Nov. 22, 1621. An apprenticeship normally lasted 7 years and according to the bylaws of the company the apprentice had to be at least 24 years old to gain freeman status upon the completion of his apprenticeship. So Richard was probably in his teens. Roger Cocke was the man to whom he was apprenticed. However, this record also tells us that Richard left the apprenticeship before completing it. When, it does not say.

So the picture that emerges of Richard so far is this:

He was born in the St. Chad's parish of Shrewsbury, possibly in the suburb of Frankwell, probably in the first decade of the 17th century. His father was a George Gardner. He was admitted in the Shrewsbury School in 1619. By 1621, his father had died and in that year Richard entered into an apprenticeship with Roger Cocke in the Company of Taylers and Skinners [furriers] in Shrewsbury. Sometime during the next seven years Richard left the guild without becoming a freeman. What occupation or trade he subsequently pursued is not known.

He married Katherine, possibly as early as 1631, and may have fathered a son John in 1632, who did not survive infancy. Katherine bore him another

son, John, in 1634. By 1637, Richard and his son John were present on Farrar's Island, Henrico County, Virginia. Katherine had died by then, the circumstances of which are not known. There exists no public record of Richard after 1637. John appears next in a 1650 land patent in Northumberland County.

George and Richard were very likely descendants of Richard Gardiner of Frankwell, but this cannot be proved at present, because of the missing St. Chad's registers. After having immersed myself in the known Gardner pedigrees and surviving parish records, my opinion is that it is more likely that George and Richard were collateral, rather than direct, descendants of the aforementioned Richard Gardiner, dyer, philanthropist and author of the first English book on horticulture in 1603 called "Profitable Instructions".

Quiz

True or false: Ozzy Osbourne is a descendant of the Neanderthal man.

True

False

powered by

Skip >