

The 'Line of the Dissenter'

William Best, vicar of St. Nicholas Church Kenilworth 1690-1720, was at supporter of King Charles I and all that he stood for. His dislike of Cromwell and his men was clearly shown in his 'Survey of the Church' written in 1714 (Ref:06) and in it he refers to Joseph Drury, our Cromwell soldier, as 'a dissenter from the church'. Whilst most of Joseph's seven children appear to have eventually fallen into line with the church, Richard, does not appear to have done so as he and his family appear in a section with the parish registers under 'Dissentors'.

The line has been difficult to trace because of the lack of entries in the conventional church records but this line does appear, by a strange quirk of fate, in some other fascinating and well preserved documents which have come to light. From these documents and a few other facts it is possible to piece together what I have called '**The Line of The Dissenter**'.

The puzzle starts with Richard (b.1662) and his family and will take us through to the last of this line, Mary Drury, who died in 1860.

Firstly, there is a Sarah Drury who died on 13th May 1750 (Ref:19) and we have no other reference to a Sarah Drury. It is probable that one of the unbaptized daughters of Richard was called Sarah.

Secondly, it was usual to name the eldest son after the father and this would make the son born 15th March 1700, Richard. This is substantiated by various property leases concerning property in Warwick between dates 1755 - 1760 in which reference is made to Richard Drury, baker of Kenilworth and which must be this son. There are also various other references to this Richard, including his Last Will and Testament, which are shown under Richard Drury b.1700 d.1760. This son, Richard, is known to have been married to Rose (ref:19). The date of the marriage is not recorded but she is known to have died 14th May 1742.

Richard is known to have died 13th February 1760 (Ref:19) and in his Last Will and Testament he leaves his estate in trust to various people including his wife Elizabeth to be passed on to his children in equal shares on their 21st birthdays (Ref: RDOd). The wife Elizabeth is obviously a second marriage and the estate is left in trust in order to protect the children's inheritance. The documents do not make it clear whether the children are from the first or the second marriage.

Attention must now be paid to an agreement of sale made in the year 1791 between Richard Drury and an agent of the Earl of Warwick concerning property in Warwick. The Agreement (Ref: RD8) made by Richard Drury, son of Richard Drury deceased baker of Kenilworth on behalf of his mother Elizabeth Drury. The agreement then goes on to explain that he is representing all the deceased Richard Drury's children and lists them as follows:

"..... which said Elizabeth Drury is the widow of Richard Drury late of Kenilworth aforesaid baker deceased and which Richard Drury party hereto Elizabeth the wife of the said Thomas Barnes, Mary the wife of the said Thomas Whebel and Hannah the wife of the said John Hands are all surviving children of the said Richard Drury deceased"

This document thus fills in the next generation of the line but makes no mention of which marriage the children were from. Little is known about these characters although dates of two of their marriages have been supplied via the IGI as follows:

Elizabeth Drury to Thomas Barnes 5th. Nov. 1770

Hannah Drury to John Hands 21st. Oct. 1779

The next piece of the puzzle can now be slotted into place. In Ref: 30 the gravestones in the churchyard of St. Nicholas Church Kenilworth are listed. It was quite a puzzle as to where some of these entries fitted into the tree because several are not mentioned in Parish Registers. The stones listed under index 228/229 give us the last generation of 'Dissenters'.

Index 229 shows a family headed by Richard Drury who died 12th. Sept. 1819 aged 68 (also Ref:17). This is the Richard mentioned the agreement of sale and the stone also mentions his wife, Ann, although the details are unclear. It is probably that this Ann is the Ann mentioned in Ref: 16 as being buried 19th. Oct. 1843 aged 82. On the same stone Elizabeth Drury, daughter of Richard and Ann is mentioned as being buried 12th March 183?

Index 228, the stone next to 229, mentions three other members of the family as follows:

Richard Drury died 6th Feb. 1885, Aged 65

Sophia Drury died 2nd. August 1857, Aged 59

Henry Drury died 18th. June 1860, Aged 68

It should be noted that there are no entries in the Parish Registers for these stones, however, St. Nicholas churchyard was also the Municipal burial ground from the early 19th. Century onwards and records of these burials appear in the Grave Records (Ref:72)

Finally, Sophia Drury, is shown in the Warwick census of 1851 (Ref: 36) as being 54 and unmarried. No other Drury's were resident in Warwick at that time, however the 1841 census (Ref:85) shows Mary and Ann Drury living at Abbey Hill, Kenilworth.

It would appear that none of this last generation married and so the '**Line of The Dissenter**' came to an end just five generations and 200 years after it had started as a scribbled entry at the back of a faded Parish Register. Remembered only by a few crumbling gravestones in a country churchyard the line through the generations leaves many questions unanswered.

The last piece of the puzzle has now been revealed for generations to come almost 350 years after it started

The 'Dissenters' Drury Family Tree

