

ANOTHER THREE FAMILIES FROM WARWICKSHIRE

Besides the Fiddian family itself there are a number of other notable families in our pedigree who come from Warwickshire and in particular there are the Cooper, King and Collins families. In addition to sharing the county of their origin, they may all derive from Yeoman stock and the latter two are also directly linked. On a broader level they are also very common names each being recorded between 1.5 and 2.5 million times on genealogy sites, but are all relatively more common in Warwickshire itself (possibly up to four times more common than elsewhere in England). This of course makes it more difficult to ensure the accuracy of any historical research.

It will come as no surprise to learn that Cooper is originally an occupational surname derived from the Anglo-Saxon word for a barrel maker and as such is one of the oldest hereditary names recorded. Our first Cooper was actually more likely to have been a Yeoman or Farmer and was Robert Cooper born in about 1535, my 10x great-grandfather. He had a son John Cooper born in 1569 at Alveston near Stratford-upon-Avon who married Maria Biddle in 1601 at nearby Southam. The following year they had a son, also John Cooper born at Southam who had remained quite local and married Anna Pigeon at Sherbourne near Warwick in 1626. But by the following year they had moved 35 miles northwest to Birmingham where their son Joseph Cooper was born.

The family would then remain in Birmingham for the next 100 years or so and since all the records over this time relate to St Martin's Church it is likely that they lived near the Bull Ring area of Birmingham. In 1654 Joseph married Mary Metcalfe at St Martin's and they would go on to have at least 7 children, 5 daughters and two sons, the last of which was Samuel Cooper born in 1675. Samuel then married a local lady named Mary Abell in 1706 and they had a daughter Sarah Cooper in 1709 followed by a son Samuel in 1712. Sarah married my 5x great-grandfather Thomas Fiddian in 1740 at Halesowen ending our branch of the Cooper family. Thomas was a Nail Manufacturer and so it is possible that Samuel, Sarah's father, may also have worked in Iron Production or a related occupation, indeed he could have been a Barrel Maker (Cooper!) but that seems unlikely after all those years.

The second of our families bore the name of King, which like many names was gradually formed by the regular use of a nickname. In this case the nickname would likely have arisen ultimately from the old English word 'cyning' meaning kingly and so perhaps denote a regal manner in the original bearer of the name. My 10x great-grandfather John King born in about 1560 was the first of my ancestors with this surname but there is no knowing how regal he was. Indeed we do not know for sure what his occupation was although he may have been another Yeoman Farmer or the like. The birth of his son John King in 1592 at Coleshill a market town near Birmingham gives us pause to question whether he could be working on the land from such an urban habitation.

John married Alice Haddon in 1616 at Bulkington a large village between Nuneaton and Coventry and they had several children in Coventry, including Thomas King who was baptised at Holy Trinity Church in 1629. Thomas married Elizabeth Male at Allesley, a village in Coventry, in 1647 and they had at least 5 children who were all christened at Holy Trinity Church, including Seny King born in 1659. Seny married an Elizabeth sometime in the 1680s and they had several children in Coventry, one of whom was Thomas King also christened at Holy Trinity Church in 1692. Thomas remained in Coventry marrying Penelope Blake at Holy Trinity in 1717. They had six children in six years, though two sons died in infancy, with their only daughter being christened with the unusual name of Cave (from an aunt).

The youngest surviving son was John King born in 1723 and christened as usual at Holy Trinity. He married Catherine Collins in about 1743, probably in Coventry, and they had eight children. The second of four daughters was Elizabeth King born in 1749 and she would later marry William Showell in 1768 at Holy Trinity Church. Their daughter Catharine Showell born in 1771 at Coventry married William Fiddian, Gentleman and Brass Founder in 1795 at Birmingham. The fact that the latter was a quite notable figure in Birmingham society would suggest that the King, Collins and Showell families were probably 'middle class' but we can really say no more than this.

The final family is the Collins clan whose surname is generally thought to derive from the patronymic Nicholas. The latter was a very common name of Greek-Roman origin introduced by the Normans and abbreviated to Col. The addition of 'kin' by the Saxons meaning 'son of' led initially to Colkin but this ended up in various forms including Collins. My 10x great-grandfather William Collins was born in about 1510 in Warwickshire and like the head of the two

previous families may also have been a Yeoman or similar. He had a son Thomas Collins born in 1541 and baptised ironically at St Nicholas Church, Warwick and 5 more children thereafter, though twins born in 1542 died in infancy. Thomas married Joyce Milnes in 1575 at Kinsbury near Tamworth and they had a son Thomas born in 1578. Thomas then had two more children Edward Collins born in 1596 and Simon Collins born in 1597, but perhaps this was with a second wife.

Edward married an Edith and appears to have moved to Clifton upon Dunsmore near Rugby where they had at least three children, including another Edward Collins born in 1649. This Edward married Janes Miles in 1674 at Nuneaton and was back in Kingsbury by the following year when the first of their four sons was born, though he died shortly afterwards. Their second son was another Edward Collins born in 1680, and he married Elizabeth Jackson in 1710 at Kingsbury. They had 8 children, with 3 of them dying in childhood, and one of the surviving daughters was Catherine Collins born in 1721 at Kingsbury. As already discussed above Catherine married John King and their daughter Elizabeth King married William Showell whose daughter Catharine married William Fiddian my 3x great-grandfather.

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