

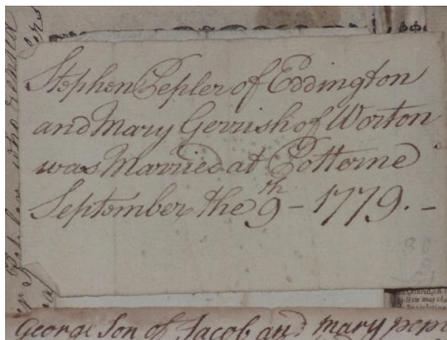
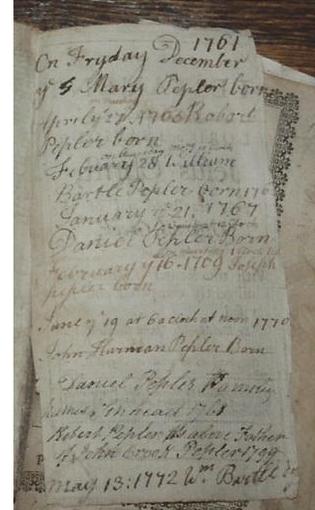
PEPLER FAMILY HISTORY

Introduction and sources

There is evidence of the Pepler family living and farming on the northern edge of Salisbury Plain from the late 16th century onwards. From that date they appear in records of villages and hamlets centred on the ecclesiastical parish of Edington, but including East Coulston, Bratton and Erlestoke.

It is unfortunate that the records for these parishes are not as complete as they might be. Parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials are the prime source for family history before the introduction of civil registration of births, marriages and deaths in 1837; they were first ordered to be kept in 1538, by Thomas Cromwell. The registers for Edington, which are central to the story, survive only from 1695 (burials from 1678). In 1598, parishes were ordered to return annual copies of parish register entries to the Diocesan registry; in theory, these "Bishop's transcripts" should make up for the failings of parish registers. In the case of Edington, they survive only sparsely from October 1597 with frequent gaps. Other sources such as wills and manorial records can be used to supplement the registers, but they cannot make up entirely for their failings.

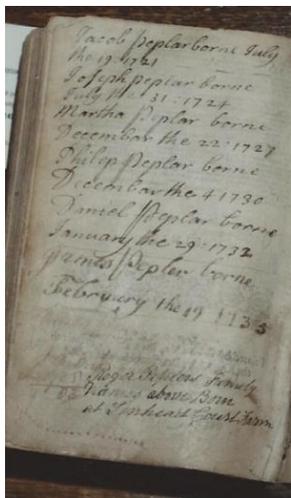
One further particular source must be mentioned: a family Bible, presently (June 2000) in the possession of Roger Pepler of Tinhead Road, Edington. Printed and published in 1637, it contains notes, in various different hands, on the births of the children of Roger Pepler, 1721-1735, of the children of Jacob and Mary Pepler, 1748-1759, and of the children of Daniel Pepler, 1761-1770, and of the marriage of Stephen Pepler in 1779. Apparently the Bible had passed down to John Crook Pepler junior; at his death it passed into a branch of the family which emigrated to Canada, before being returned to Edington in the 1940s.



Early evidence

The first family we can establish is that of Richard Pepler of Coulston, yeoman, who was buried in Edington on 28 March 1622. In his will, written on 27 January 1622 NS, he left bequests of 2 shillings and 6 pence apiece to his sons John Pepler, Wa(l)ter Pepler, and Richard Pepler, and his daughters Wilmoth Pepler and Seslye, wife of William Ludon, with the residue of his estate to his wife Anne. The inventory of his goods and chattels, taken on 4 May 1622, describes him as a tailor of West Coulston, and valued his moveable goods at £5-4s-8d (c£5.23p). Wilmoth's baptism is recorded in the Bishop's transcripts for Edington in March 1600.

Children of John and Walter, possibly the sons of Richard, are recorded in Edington in the first half of the 17th century:-



Cicelye daughter of John Pepler was buried on 2 Aug 1623
 Cicelye daughter of John Pepler was baptised on 4 Jan 1624 NS
 John son of John was baptised on 21 Aug 1625
 Anne daughter of Walter Pepler was baptised on 28 Jan 1629 NS
 Anne daughter of Walter Pepler was buried on 14 Sep 1633
 Jane daughter of Walter Pepler was baptised on 21 Jul 1631
 Mary daughter of Walter Pepler was baptised on 22 Sep 1633
 George son of Walter Pepler was baptised 13 Mar 1636 NS

Jane Pepler, wife of Walter Pepler, possibly the Walter noted above, was buried on 11 Oct 1638.

In the same year, another Walter married Joan (or Jane) Godden on 26 November. It is possible but certainly not provable that he is a son of the previous Walter.

At the end of the 17th century, it appears that there were at least 3 Pepler families in Edington:-
 William, son of Richard Pepler was baptised on 19 Nov 1694
 “Richard Pepler’s sonne baptised on 23 May 1697”

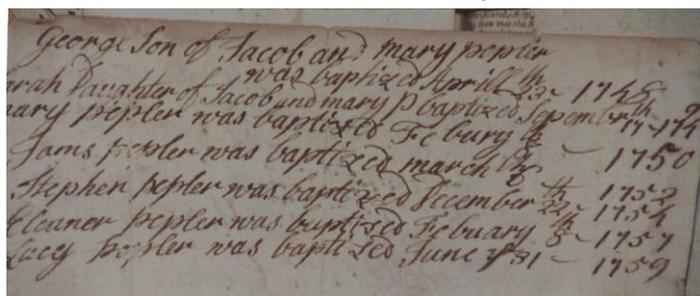
Jone (sic) daughter of Walter Pepler was buried on 6 Sep (?Oct) 1695
 Elizabeth daughter of Walter Pepler was baptised on 30 April 1696
 Robert son of Walter Pepler was buried on 15 May 1698
 Mary wife of Walter Pepler was buried 31 Oct 1698

“John Peplar of Coulston his child was baptised 18 Mar 1696”[1696 NS]

Problems

There has been for many years an accepted Pepler family tree, which has passed down through various lines of the family. It begins with Walter Pepler, wife unknown, buried in Edington in 1684. He is alleged to be the father of Walter Pepler, born 1639, died 1726, Jane Pepler, buried at Edington 6 October 1695 and Robert Pepler, buried at Edington 15 May 1698. The younger Walter married Mary ____, and had 2 children, a daughter and a son Roger in 1697.

It is not possible to substantiate this part of the tree. A Walter Pepler was buried in Edington on 27 Aug 1684, Jane Pepler on 6 Oct 1695, and Robert “son of Walter” on 15 May 1698, but there is no way of demonstrating from the existing records that the latter 2 were children of the first. The form “son of...” used in relation to Robert is usually applied to children, not to apparent adults whose father had died 14 years previously. Nor is there any provable link between the 2 Walters, apart from the shared Christian name.



When the second Walter was buried in Edington, on 19 Oct 1726 he was described as Walter Pepler senior, arguing the existence of another Walter at the time.

There is no record in the parish registers of Edington of the baptism of Roger Pepler in 1697. The baptism of a daughter (no name given) of Walter Pepler is recorded on 2 Jan 1697 NS, and that of a son of Richard Pepler (no name given) on 23 May 1697. Walter Pepler (d 1726) left a will, proved 15 Dec 1726, which left bequests to sons Francis, Henry and Thomas and daughters Sarah, Ann, Mary, Elizabeth and Jane, and to his wife (unnamed) who was clearly still alive and was not the Mary, wife of Walter, buried in Edington on 6 Dec 1698. He may, of course have married again after his first wife's death.

More significantly, Walter's will does not refer to a son Roger. There may be any number of reasons for a child to be omitted from a will, but it is unusual.