

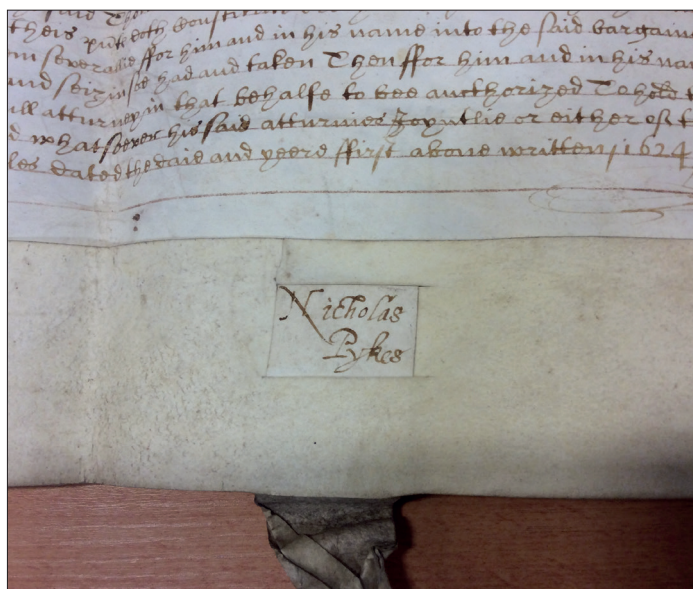
Pikes from Bristol to London and Herefordshire

by David Pike (4985)

This article stems from my efforts to trace the descendants of the man who was mayor of Bristol in 1549, namely William Pykes. Researching this family has involved a variety of different records from different places.

The family's surname is variously recorded as Pike, Pikes, Pyke, Pykes as well as other more creative variants, but for the sake of ease of readability I will generally write "Pike" throughout the remainder of this report, except when quoting text. To briefly mention the first few generations, mayor William had sons named John, John and Walter. How William came to have two sons, both named John and both who lived into adulthood, remains a mystery to me. These two Johns were both sheriffs of Bristol in 1553. Their brother Walter was sheriff in 1567 and mayor in 1583. Walter married in 1543 to Katherine Cooke (whose father Roger was mayor in 1535, 1542 and 1552). Walter and Katherine had a son John who was baptised in 1556 at St Nicholas in Bristol. This John appears to have studied at Oxford University, evidently serving for a time as Dean of Arts.¹ John married Alice Thorne (a daughter of Nicholas Thorne who was chamberlain of Bristol in 1584). In 1624, John and Alice's son Nicholas signed an indenture (now preserved as item 4485/1 at the Bristol Record Office) in which he is described as follows:

Nicholas Pikes of the Cittie of Bristoll gent sonne and heire of John Pikes late of the Cittie of Bristoll gent Deceased wch John was sonne and heire of Walter Pikes late of the same Cittie gent deceased and of Katherine his wife whoe was the Daughter of Roger Cooke late of the same Cittie of Bristoll Alderman Deceased



The Visitation of Gloucester in 1623 contains a pedigree for the Thorne family, which includes Alice, her husband John Pyke and son Nicholas. Moreover, Nicholas is listed with his wife Margaret and four children, including a son Walter who is aged 4 years.²

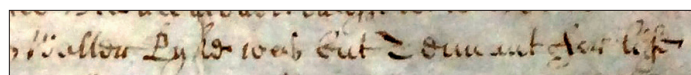
Allow me to now digress and mention John Guy who in 1610 established a colony in what is now Cupids, Newfoundland (just an hour's drive from where I live). John was originally from Bristol, to which he returned and became mayor in 1618. He had several children at Bristol, including a son Robert and a

daughter Elizabeth. Although I have not yet found a marriage record, I am confident that Elizabeth married Walter Pike who was the child recorded in the 1623 Visitation of Gloucester. Elizabeth's brother Robert left a PCC will (written in 1651, proved in 1652) in which he named four sons of his brother-in-law Walter Pike, namely John, Walter, William and Thomas. Moreover, Robert Guy bequeathed property in Newfoundland to his nephew John Pike, making this will the first known record that directly associates the Pike family with Newfoundland. It is Robert's third nephew William Pike to whom we now cast our attention.

William and his brothers were grandsons of the aforementioned Nicholas Pike of Bristol. Nicholas' mother Alice Thorne had a sister Mirabell who was wife of one William Druce. Mirabell left a PCC will (written in July 1643 and proved in 1645) in which she names several relatives, including her deceased nephew Nicholas Pike. Nicholas' son Walter and several of his children benefitted from Mirabell's will, in which she left property at the Pithay in Bristol to Walter (but only for the duration of his life), then to the first son of Walter and this son's lawfully begotten heirs, and in default of such issue to Walter's second son and his heirs, and in default of such issue to Walter's third son and his heirs, and in default of such issue to Walter's fourth son and his heirs. None of these four sons of Walter are identified by name within Mirabell's will. Indeed, it seems likely that they hadn't yet been born, given that Walter and Elizabeth's son John was baptised in August 1644 at Temple parish in Bristol.

Moving forward to 1690, we find that there is a property dispute in Bristol that went to Chancery. Item C 7/277/31 at the National Archives at Kew documents this case. The defendant is one William Pike. His occupation and place of residence are not stated, much to my chagrin. However, the testimony of the case is compelling. It states that William is Walter Pike's third son, the second son (named Walter) having died about a year earlier without issue, and their father Walter about two years before that. The testimony also notes that the property in dispute had previously been owned by William's father Walter, having come to him (but only for his life) by virtue of the will of Mirabell Druce. A grocer named George Watkins is named as being the present occupant of the property, located in the Pithay at Bristol.

The plaintiff in the case (Michael Pope) had been putting forward a claim for ownership of the property, it having allegedly been sold in 1654 by William's father Walter Pike to the plaintiff's father-in-law Andrew Hooke. The response given by the defendant William Pike was that by the terms of the will of Mirabell Druce, William's father Walter "was but Tennant for life And that he could not sell or dispose of" any portion of her bequest. By this logic, even if there had been a transaction between Andrew Hooke and William's father Walter, it would have no validity beyond Walter's death as the property in question was not his to sell. As noted in item C 33/276 at the National Archives, the Chancery court ruled in favour of defendant William Pike.



1694 signatures of William Pike

Located at the Bristol Record Office is a document with reference number 00713/6. It is dated 4 February 1694 and records the sale of a property in the Pithay occupied by grocer George Watkins. The sellers are a William Pike and his wife Susanna. William is described in this document as being a citizen and dyer of London. Moreover, the document bears his signature, not once, but twice, as illustrated below. Also party to this transaction is a painter named Ferdinando Verricke from St Martin in the Fields, Middlesex, although his role in the transaction is unclear.

At this point let me mention a PCC will that had intrigued me for some time. It was one that was written in 1689 and proved in 1690 for a Walter Pike of Twickenham, Middlesex who died at sea near Torbay. The PROB 11 collection from the National Archives, consisting of register copies of PCC wills, is readily available online. Something that I learned while visiting Kew in 2019 is that many of the original wills are preserved in collection PROB 10. From the handful of Pike wills that I was able to examine at the time, it was obvious that these original wills are a treasure trove for genealogists. Aside from often having handwriting that is much easier to read than the online scans of the register copies, the original wills sometimes have additional information that has been written on them. In the case of the will of Walter Pike of Twickenham (found in PROB 10/1210), because the will had not been duly witnessed at the time that it was made, it underwent additional scrutiny when being proved. Thus the original document includes a statement from Walter's brother William, affirming that the will is authentic. And because this is the original document, it bears William's signature, shown below.

1690 signature of William Pike

This signature matches those from the 1694 document at Bristol, confirming that this is the same William Pike, and hence the will is for the second son of the elder Walter Pike from Bristol. As for the contents of the will itself, Walter junior named his brother William as well as a brother Henry, for whom there is a corresponding baptism in records from Temple parish in Bristol. The records are damaged, making it difficult to determine the precise baptism date, although it appears to be from the year 1652. The entry itself pertains to two sons named Charles and Henry, with parents Walter and Elizabeth Pyke. Records from the Bristol parish of St Mary Redcliffe show that Charles (son of Mr Walter Pikes) was buried on 15 December 1654.

Recall that the 1694 document from Bristol identified William as a citizen and dyer of London, with a wife named Susanna. William's certification of the authenticity of his brother Walter's will gives additional information, for it identifies William as a silk dyer of the parish of St Martin in the Fields in Middlesex. This is the same parish of residence as Ferdinando Verricke who was party to the 1694 transaction at Bristol. While I do not yet know with certainty, my suspicion is that Ferdinando was a brother-in-law to William.

Married at Petersham, Surrey on 5 March 1676 were the couple Ferdinand Verick and Hannah Parker of Southwark. Almost a year earlier, on 29 March 1676, there was a marriage at St Marylebone between a William Pike and Susana Parker. Parish records from St Martin in the Fields show baptisms for three children of William and Susan Pike, namely Sarah in April 1680, Hannah in January 1681, and Thomas in March 1687.

Held at the Westminster Archives is a collection of settlement examinations from the parish of St Martin in the Fields for the period 1708-1795. In volume F5003 (for the year 1710) are details for the family of a William Pike, aged about 32, of Brick Street. He and his wife Elizabeth are noted to have married "in ye Fleet" on 2 November 1703 and that they have children Rebecca, Mary and Hannah. Some of these details are affirmed by William's mother Susan, who said that he was born in "Marybone" street. It is also noted that "Wm Pike ye father was a Dyer deced about 4 year ago in Herefordshire."

Baptism records for St Marylebone do not appear to be available prior to 1679, which could explain why I have been unable to

find a baptism for the William Pike who is central to this 1710 settlement examination. You may well be asking if his parents William and Susan are the same William and Susan that we have already discussed. It is promising that the examination states that William the father was a dyer. As it happens, the fact that he died in Herefordshire is also reassuring.

There was a Chancery case in 1659 involving Walter Pike (son of Nicholas) of Bristol (C 10/48/106 at the National Archives). It notes that Walter had been living in the county of Herefordshire. Apparently this dispute between Walter and his brother-in-law William Barnes had escalated to the point where Walter was arrested by the Sheriff of Herefordshire. As yet the only records of this incident that I have found are those within the Chancery testimony. Regrettably, the Chancery records don't give a location within Herefordshire for Walter's place of residence there, but the parish of Michaelchurch Escley stands out as a potential location. Hearth tax records show that a Walter Pikes was taxed there in 1664 (for more details on this, see the webpage about Pikes Farm³).

For other potential signs of the family in Herefordshire, a gentleman named Henry Pykes was buried at Michaelchurch Escley in 1719; this could be the Henry that was baptised at Bristol about 1652 and who was named in the 1689 PCC will of Walter Pike of Twickenham. Furthermore, FindMyPast notes that in 1660 one John Pike (son of Walter Pike of Michaelchurch, Herefordshire) was apprenticed to a London grocer named Hugh Coles.

So the death in Herefordshire that is mentioned in the 1710 settlement examination from St Martin in the Fields would seem to be consistent with what is known about the family. Unfortunately I have not been able to find any corresponding burial record in Herefordshire. There is a burial record at St Martin in the Fields dated 1 February 1706 for a William Pike, although I don't know how likely it would have been for a body to be brought from Herefordshire for burial.

I would like to continue tracing this family towards the present day, but am currently stalled at the two sons (William and

Thomas) of the couple William and Susan who lived at St Martin in the Fields. Son William and his wife Elizabeth appear to have no further children beyond those mentioned in the 1710 settlement examination. The examination states that this son William was never an apprentice, but was a "Covenant to Mr Blankenship in Cha: Court." Some text that is struck out suggests William may be a tailor.

Son Thomas is mentioned in a 1711 settlement examination (volume F5005) in which his mother Susan is also examined. Thomas' baptism date is stated to be 25 March 1686, which coincides with the 25 March 1686/87 record from the parish of St Martin in the Fields. What looks as though it may be a marriage record for Thomas is one from St James Duke's Place dated 7 September 1713 for a bachelor Thomas Pykes (age 26, house painter from St Martin in the Fields) and a widow Margaret Palmer (age 30, from St James Westminster). But unfortunately I have not yet been able to find subsequent records for this couple.

I would be pleased to hear if any readers have suggestions for how I might find more information about the various branches of this family.

References

1. Andrew Hegarty, *A Biographical Register of St. John's College, Oxford, 1555-1660*. (Oxford Historical Society, New Series, Volume XLIII, 2011), p116.
2. The Visitation of the County of Gloucester, Taken in the Year 1623. (The Harleian Society, Volume XXI, 1885), pp 160-161.
3. http://www.ewyaslacy.org.uk/-/Pikes-Farm-The-history-of-a-Farmhouse-in-Michaelchurch-Escley-Herefordshire/1490-2013/tg_mic_0140

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