

The Bradshaws of Pennington and Aspull

From which Katherine Bradshaw, mother of Isaiah Harrison (immigrant to America and ancestor of the Rockingham County, Virginia line of Harrisons) descends, with a brief discussion of the early Bradshaws of Lancashire in Northern England

There does seem to be a consensus among English historians that the Bradshaw surname (with or without a “de” in front and spelled a variety of ways – Bradeshaigh, Bradshagh or Bradshaigh being perhaps the original) originated in the location of the surname (Bradshaw, near Bolton, originally part of Lancashire, England) or land very close to it and spread to surrounding communities, and as the centuries progressed, so did the geographical spread of Bradshaws. And while it may never be possible to connect the several very early lines of Bradshaws together, it probably is fair to infer that those lines were connected. That is, if someone can connect to any one of the early Bradshaw lines, they are probably connected to all of them.

The Bradshaw family originated in its namesake place and branches spread throughout the county^{1,2,3}, until Dugdale, in 1664, was able to record six distinct branches⁴. The oldest Bradshaw line was located at Bradshaw in Bolton, near Turton where it continued until the close of the seventeenth century. But very early branches, all probably connected, were seated at Haigh Hall, Wigan, at Atherstone in Warwickshire, at Twinsten at Kent, and at Marple in Derbyshire, from which came John Bradshaw, President of the High Court of Justice at the trial of King Charles I⁵. In addition, Bradshaws held the manors of Westleigh, Haigh and Blackrod⁶. They were primarily freemen, yet some of them became knights and even Barons.

¹ From <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=53044&strquery=Bradshaw>

² From The Township Pennington to the Year 1875, www.leighlife.com/index.php?id=leighlife:lhpennington&page=5&rev=1244896475

³ From the Armorial Bearings of Leigh” in The Genealogical Magazine, London, page 527, Volume III, May 1899 – April 1900.

⁴ Dugdale, William. *The Visitation of the county palatine of Lancaster made in the year 1664-5*. Edited by F.R. Raines. [Manchester]: Chetham Society, 1872-1873.

⁵ From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bradshaw_\(judge\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bradshaw_(judge)) - **John Bradshaw** (b. 1602 - 31 October 1659) was an English judge. He is most notable for his role as President of the High Court of Justice for the trial of King Charles I and as the first Lord President of the Council of State of the English Republic.

In 1649 he was made president of the parliamentary commission to try the king. Other lawyers of greater prominence had refused the position. Bradshaw was a controversial choice as Lord President, and opinions of his efficiency as a judge varied. Bulstrode Whitelocke believed that he was “learned in his profession,” but Thomas Fuller dismissed him as a man “of execrable memory, of whom nothing good is remembered.” The King himself, as well as much of the court, professed to having never heard of him.

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The Katherine Bradshaw who married Thomas Harrison and begot Isaiah Harrison, immigrant and primary ancestor of the Rockingham Harrisons in America is a descendant of The Aspull & Pennington (originally Pynynston) line of Bradshaws. This line of Bradshaw descends back to Robert de Bradshaw, born circa 1275⁷.

While he served as the Lord President, he was flanked by an impressive personal guard and carried a sword at his side. He wore scarlet robes and a "broad-brimmed, bullet-proof beaver hat, which he had covered over with velvet and lined it with steel and he also wore armor underneath his robes. King Charles refused to recognize the authority of the court and would not plead. After declaring Charles I guilty as a "Tyrant, Traitor, Murderer, and a public enemy," Bradshaw did not allow the king any final words. Under English law, a condemned prisoner was no longer alive and therefore did not have the right to speak, and Bradshaw followed this tradition strictly.

Charles II was restored to his throne in 1660. On 30 January 1661 - the twelfth anniversary of the regicide - the bodies of Bradshaw, Cromwell and Henry Ireton were exhumed and displayed in chains all day on the gallows at Tyburn. At sunset the bodies were beheaded. The bodies were thrown into a common pit and the heads were displayed on pikes on top of Westminster Hall. It is possible however, that the body wasn't actually that of John Bradshaw. Apparently, anticipating retaliation, James Bradshaw took his father's corpse to Jamaica and the soldiery there buried it at the top of "Gun Hill" in Jamaica. The spot was marked by a canon and the inscription refers to his father's dust. See *Annals of Jamaica*, pages 444 and 445, Note 6

⁶ **William Bradshaw** came to the manor of Westleigh through settlement and the Haigh Hall and the manor at Blackrod through marriage to **Mabel Norreys**. From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mab%27s_Cross - According to local legend, when Sir William Bradshaw failed to return from the Crusades, Lady Mabel Bradshaw, presuming her husband was dead, married a Welsh knight. When Sir William returned from a ten year campaign he murdered his wife's new husband and then made Lady Mabel do penance for her unintentional bigamy by walking from Haigh Hall to a stone cross in Wigan "bare footed and bare legged" once a week as long as she lived. Mab's Cross still stands in Wigan today.

The reality is a bit different. Sir William Bradshaw's absence was not due to a pilgrimage or the Crusades. On 1 November 1315, Adam Banastre, Henry de Lea, and Sir William Bradshaw rebelled against Thomas Plantagenet, 2nd Earl of Lancaster. The rebellion was ended when the Deputy Sheriff of Lancashire defeated the rebels in battle north of the Ribble; Bradshaw escaped and became an outlaw. In 1319, it was assumed that Sir William was dead. He returned to his estates after the Earl of Lancaster was executed following his defeat at battle of Boroughbridge on 16 March 1322. Sir William was convicted and imprisoned in Kenilworth Castle, and later Pontefract Castle, before he was released in 1324. Rather than killing his wife's husband on Newton-le-Willows, it was Sir William himself who was slain there. On 16 August 1333, Sir William was killed in Newton-le-Willows in a fight with members of the Radcliffe family. There is no evidence that Lady Mabel remarried, either before or after her husband died, or that she did penance at the cross. The manor of Blackrod and Haigh Hall remained in the Bradshaw family following Mabel Bradshaw's appeal (and probably because she built two Chapels for the Church of England) after having the fiefs removed by the King.

⁷ Urmston of Westleigh, and Bradshaw of Pennington, Co. Lancaster, W.D. Pink, *The Genealogist*, Vol XVII, 1901, pages 14-16.

Initially, the manor⁸ of Pennington most likely came to the Bradshaws through the marriage of Joan (the daughter of Adam de Pennington and his wife Joan) and Roger Bradshaw of Pennington. These Bradshaws held the manor for only a few generations when finally Alesia (Alice) Bradshaw, who had married Sir Richard le Mascy of Tatton, Knt. died without descendants. Therefore the manor was succeeded to Mascy's younger brother John, and then to John's descendants, outside the Bradshaw bloodline. This early line of Bradshaws cannot be directly connected to Katherine Bradshaw (father is Edward Bradshaw) and wife of the Reverend Thomas Harrison.

The manor (and Pennington Hall) came back to the Bradshaws in 1625 when Roger Bradshaw obtained possession of the manor through a settlement shortly before he himself died. Roger Bradshaw had held lands, including the rectory annuity, in Aspull and Pennington outside the manor itself for years. In fact, for many years, this Roger Bradshaw was one of the wealthiest men in Pennington. The fact that the manor itself came back to him and this Bradshaw line without a direct proven "genetic" connection to the earlier Bradshaw line is a strong indication that these two seemingly unconnected lines of Bradshaws are in fact probably connected at some point. For years the Bradshaws were active in town affairs and have given their names to several landmarks including Bradshaw Leach and Bradshawgate. Roger Bradshaw is the father of Edward Bradshaw, who married Susanna Blease and begot Katherine Bradshaw, wife of the Reverend Thomas Harrison and mother of the immigrant Isaiah Harrison. During his lifetime, Edward Bradshaw was a Mercer and Alderman and Sheriff of Chester. After his death in 1671, Edward Bradshaw was buried in St. Peters Church in Chester. In his will, "I give to my daughter, Katherine Harrison, 40 pounds for her own disposal and to her husband, Dr. Harrison, I give 10 pounds & to her children 400 pounds to be equally divided amongst them."⁹

Edward Bradshaw's older brother Richard held Pennington Manor upon the death of their father. Richard was instrumental in building the grammar school in Pennington. His line disappeared when his grandson died without heirs and the Manor passed again from the Bradshaws.

⁸ In Feudalism, the term "manor" does not necessarily imply a building, but rather land. Therefore, Pennington Manor was a large area of land, of which Pennington Hall was located on a small amount of the manor land.

⁹ History of Cheshire, by Thomas Helsby, Vol. I, page 324, as referenced in The House of Cravens, pages 119-120.