

The Mystery of Captain John Shenton of Leicestershire Version 1.0

An [earlier discussion](#) of this document presented certain facts and speculations about Captain John Shenton (Leicestershire, England, ~1612-1699) regarding whether he might be an ancestor of [Nathaniel Shenton](#) (1699), the earliest known member of one Shenton line on [this web site](#).

The key of the issue was a memorial constructed in or prior to 1949 linking John Shenton and an Austin Kirk Shenton (1895-1918). The text of the memorial (“...the swords of two members of the Shenton family.” and “...and Austin Kirk Shenton, nine generations later ...”) can be interpreted as stating that Austin Kirk Shenton is a direct descendant of John Shenton. Since Austin Kirk’s lineage is known back to Nathaniel Shenton (~1699 – unk), this would make John Shenton an ancestor (father, grandfather, great grandfather) of Nathaniel.

Subsequent information, however, seems to refute this interpretation, so the quest for Nathaniel’s (and Austin Kirk’s) antecedents continues.

EVIDENCE

The specific evidence refuting John’s ancestorship, albeit circumstantial, seems conclusive and is contained in John Nichols’ history of Leicestershire (“History and Antiquities of the County of Leicestershire, Volume IV, Part II, containing Sparkenhoe Hundred”, London, 1811). This is the same document in which is found the “PEDIGREE of SHENTON, of Barwell, 1682”. It also contains a pedigree of the Power family. John’s only son Samuel (~1642 - ~1711) had three daughters, one of whom (Dorothy (1681 – unk) married Edward Power (~1685 – 1765).

The Nichols material on the Power family includes the following statement: "Mr Edward Power of Barwell married Dorothy one of the Granddaughters of Captain Shenton and became possessed of the [John Shenton] estate. After Edward's decease and that of his three sons and only daughter (none of whom married) it came in 1785 to a near relation, Mr Robert Power of Barlestone, their heir by law." John’s son Samuel is described in the Shenton pedigree as his “only son”. Samuel himself is shown in the pedigree as having three daughters (Mary, Dorothy and Sarah) but no sons. The passing of John’s estate to daughter Dorothy - whether from her father Samuel or directly from her grandfather John - tends to confirm that that there was no male heir to inherit.

Therefore there was no male heir of John Shenton to be an ancestor of Austin Kirk Shenton (or any except his only son Samuel).

SITUATION

So if Austin Kirk is not descended from Captain John Shenton but he is related to him, we must assume a direct descent from some reasonably close relative of John's. The relationship is fairly certain as the creator of the Shenton Memorial identified Austin Kirk and John as "two members of the Shenton family", and the same person had apparently received Captain John Shenton's sword – presumably passed down a family line for over two hundred years.

Likely candidates are John's brothers Nathaniel and Robert. Nathaniel ("of Barwell" per the pedigree) had an "only son" Francis according to the pedigree. Robert ("of Hinckley" per the pedigree) had, according to the pedigree, three sons, Francis, Robert and Nathaniel. The IGI and Hinckley parish register transcripts indicate three other sons (Charles, Thomas, and John), but none survived childhood. In addition to Captain John's brothers, other candidates exist farther afield such as his half-uncle Randolph and Randolph's five sons: Randolph, Robert, Samuel, John and Joshua.

Then there remains one of the original questions generated by the wording on the Shenton Memorial – the mathematical or genealogical meaning of "Austin Kirk Shenton, nine generations later ...".

Thus there is significant opportunity for future research, but I believe we can eliminate Captain John Shenton as a direct ancestor of Austin Kirk Shenton and Nathaniel Shenton.