

The Ridgeway Family

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THE EMIGRANT ANCESTOR of this numerous family, Richard Ridgway, arrived at Burlington, West Jersey, in 1679. In most of the published accounts of the origin of this family they follow the same version, namely, kinship with the Derbyshire family of Pecoek, alias Ridgway, of whom was Sir Thomas Ridgway, later Earl of Londonderry. Richard, the emigrant, is usually stated to be a younger son of Robert, second Earl of Londonderry, who was baptized August 24th, 1631, at Torre, Devonshire.

This is merely an assumption and is not borne out by the records. Sir William Ridgway of Cambridge University, England, has lately examined very thoroughly all the recorded wills, deeds, marriages, births and death of all the Ridgways in England, and he informs me there is not the remotest trace of any connection whatsoever between Derbyshire and Berkshire Ridgways. He points out that Sir Thomas's people were originally Pecoeks and lived in Derbyshire near the Roman highway, called "The Ridgway," and were called Pecoek, alias Ridgeway, for that reason. In later generations they were called Ridgway, alias Pecoek. It is his contention that the Berkshire family, in a like manner, also took its name from the same highway. This road likewise runs through Berkshire, near Welford, a hamlet in the White Horse Vale, about five miles east of Lambourne and about the same distance north west of Speenhamland (Newbury).

Those of the Ridgway-Ridgway family in America descend from Richard of Burlington co., West Jersey, using the Ridgway arms, *viz.*, sable, two wings cojoined in fess, argent, and the three peacock heads, azure, etc., do so without any foundation or authority for such assumption and are not justified in such display.

Richard Ridgway settled on the west bank of, the river Delaware in 1679, in what was later Penns Manor, and later moved to what is now Morrisville (Bucks Co., Pa.). After the arrival of William Penn in 1682 a law was passed in Pennsylvania requiring a record of all arrivals. In the Bucks county "Book of Arrivals," page 18 (original in the Bucks Co. Hist. Society at Doylestown, and a MS. copy in Philadelphia at the Pennsylvania Historical Society), the following is re-corded:

"Richard Ridgway and Elizabeth, his wife, of Welford, in the County of Bark [Berks], Taylor [Tailor], arrived in this Delaware river in the ship 'Jacob and Mary' of London, in the 7th Mo., 1679, with their children: Thomas, born the 25th, 5th mo., 1677, and Richard, born the 27th, 2nd Mo., 1680."

This declaration of trade as tailor would also indicate that Richard was of yeoman stock. Further proof is in the following extracts from the Welford parish register, printed by Oliver Ratcliff of Olney, Bucks, England, together with the records of the Chapel of Ease of Wickham, in the Parish of Welford

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"REIDG W AY - WROUGGWAY - WRUDGWAY

"Rebekah Wroughway, daughter of William & Rebecca, baptised January 25th, 1645.

"John Ridgway, buried July 18th, 1661 (p. 20).

"William Ridgway, buried October 12th, 1661 (p. 20).

"Richard Wrougway, son of Richard and Elizabeth, baptised March 4th, 1674.

"John Brown and Hannah Rugway, married at Wickham Chappel, December 16th; 1677 (P. 79).

"Jean Rudgway, buried March 27th, 1699, Welford (p. 32)."

There are also records of Chamberlayne-Chamberlain baptisms and deaths. It is a matter of record that Richard married Elizabeth, daughter of Elizabeth Chamberlain. The early Ridgway record in England then works out as follows:

William, the first of the name, born circa 1620o, buried at Wickham, Oct. 12th, 1661, married, circa 1644, Rebecca (surname not ascertained). Their issue undoubtedly were: Hannah, Jean, Rebecca, Richard and Thomas.

1. **Rebecca**. The record reads, Rebekah Wroughway, filia Gulielini, et Rebeckae Wroughway, bapt. Jan. 25th, 1645.
2. **Richard** Ridgway (probably son of William and Rebecca) born circa 1648; died 1723, Burlington Co., N.J.; married (i) circa 1673 in England, Elizabeth Chamberlain, born -----, died Jan. 31st, 1692; daughter of Elizabeth Chamberlain; married (2) Abigail Stockton, died 1726, daughter of Richard and Abigail Stockton of Flushing, L.I., and late of Burlington Co.
3. **Thomas** Ridgway, son of William and Rebecca, married July 10th, 1679, at Wickham, Berks., Mary Field.
4. **Hannah** Ridgway, daughter of William and Rebecca, married December 16th, 1677, at Wickham, Berks., John Brown. Richard Brown, whose daughter, Hannah Brown, married John Ridgway in New Jersey, was perhaps a son of this couple.
5. **Richard** Ridgway, son of Richard and Elizabeth (Chamberlain) was baptised March 4th, 1674, at Wickham, Berks. This was no doubt the emigrant couple's first born and he, no doubt, died young, as no further record is found of him.