

The Hardakers of Howarth

1. Origins

St. Michael and All Angels is the parish church of Haworth, a village about 9 miles west of Bradford, now famous as the home of the Brontes and as a stop on the Keighley and Worth Valley preserved steam engine line. The St Michael parish registers are available from about 1645. For quite some time after this date they remained hard to read¹, often recording events by the month in which they occurred rather than with their exact date, and very often not recording the names of brides at weddings and mothers at baptisms. This introduces a considerable degree of uncertainty into any conclusions that we can draw from them.

The earliest Hardaker event recorded at St. Michael's was the baptism of Abraham by Stephen Hardaker in February 1669. There followed a stream of baptisms by a Stephen Hardaker running from 1669 to 1720. There was also a marriage of Jonas Hardaker and Susan Milnes in January 1680. As there is no earlier reference to a Hardaker, Stephen and Jonas clearly moved into the parish from elsewhere.

The next problem here is the number and spread of baptisms in Haworth attributed to a Stephen Hardaker. It is almost impossible that one individual would be christening children over a 51 year period from 1669 to 1720. Therefore, it seems certain that there were two Stephens. As no baptism can be found for either of them it is impossible to be sure about their relationship, if any. On the other hand, it is hard to believe that they were unrelated, both living in the hamlet of Oxenhope a mile to the south of Haworth, and both appearing in the parish at about the same time.

One possibility is that Stephen senior had a son Stephen whose baptism has not been found. It is possible that the son married Ann Pearson in Bradford in May 1691 and that this couple were responsible for some of the later baptisms. There is nothing in the marriage record to suggest that Stephen and Ann were from Howarth - but Stephen Hardaker was not a common name at this time. The average age on marriage for a man at this time was around 25, suggesting that Stephen was born in around 1666. The earliest actual baptism by the older Stephen was of a son Abraham in 1669, so the timing fits.

This might help date the arrival of the family in Haworth, because it could be that we have not found a baptism of the younger Stephen because it took place elsewhere. In other words, the Hardakers may have arrived in Haworth in the mid 1660s.

It also seems likely that the Stephens were related to Jonas Hardaker who married in Haworth in January 1680. If Jonas was about 25 on marriage, he was probably born in about 1655. Jonas could also have been a son of the older Stephen. Whilst this presents the problem of a gap between the birth of Jonas and the other baptisms (real and potential) in the mid to late 1660s, Jonas may have been younger than 25 when he married, and there may have been other missing baptisms (before the family's arrival in Howarth) between the 1650s and the 1660s.

¹ The digitised version available on ancestry.com has whole pages that are so faint as to be unreadable. The England and Wales christening, marriages, and burials series on Family Search, presumably taken from an earlier transcription, are more helpful.

There is some evidence that supports the notion that Jonas and the two Stephens were linked. On March 1 1712 the younger Stephen baptised a son and called him Jonas. Whilst this suggests a familial link it does not, of course, tell us what sort of link.

In short, it is impossible to tell where the Howarth Hardakers came from in the mid to late the seventeenth century and to be precise about the relationship between their three oldest representatives.

2. Children of a Stephen Hardaker.

As a working hypothesis we have, therefore, an older Stephen Hardaker who was probably associated with the following offspring:

Jonas born in around 1655, place unknown, baptism not found
Stephen born in around 1666, place unknown, baptism not found²
Abraham baptised in February 1669 in Haworth, living in Oxenhope
Abraham baptised in April 1676 in Haworth, living in Oxenhope

Then we have the marriage of a Stephen Hardaker and Ann Pearson in Bradford in 1691. All other baptisms attributed to a Stephen took place after 1691, suggesting that they belonged to this couple:

John baptised in June 1692
Martha baptised in September 1703
Mary baptised in January 1705
Stephen baptised in January 1708
Jonas baptised in May 1712
Elizabeth baptised in April 1714
William baptised in July 1717
An unnamed son buried on 1st Feb 1718-9
An unnamed child buried on 4th Feb. 1718-9; presumably these children were twins.
Joseph baptised in February 1720

Again, this list is problematic. If the Stephen/Ann Pearson marriage from 1691 is relevant, Ann was probably born in about 1670 (the average age for a woman on marriage being slightly lower than that for a man). If she was born in 1670, she would have been an unlikely 50 on the birth of Joseph in 1720. No alternative or second marriage for Stephen has been found. The other problem with this list is the gap between the baptisms of John in 1692 and Martha a decade later. One wonders whether Ann (Pearson) died at some point after 1692 and Stephen re-married - but there is no evidence to support this theory.

² There was a baptism of a Stephen Hardaker by Lancelot Hardaker on 28 Oct 1666 at Whitkirk, on the other side of Leeds. Whilst the timing would fit the likely age of SH from Haworth, Whitkirk (about 25 miles away) seems unlikely. Moreover, the Whitkirk register is very difficult to read and I am not convinced that the surname was Hardaker. Indeed, Lancelot was associated with another three baptisms at Whitkirk in the mid 1660s and his surname has been variously transcribed as Hardaker, Hardwicke, and Harden. For my part, I believe that he was a Hardwick(e) and that this baptism is therefore irrelevant.

A Stephen Hardaker was buried on 21 January 1732. The age of the deceased was not recorded and so this burial might be that of the Stephen born in the mid-1660s (and aged about 70 on death) or his son born in 1708 (and aged 24 on death).

3. Descendants of the elder Stephen

3.1 First generation

Of the children of the first Stephen, Jonas married Susan Milnes in Haworth in January 1680. The only baptism attributed to this couple was that of a male Hardaker in May 1683. There is no further information about the parents or the child.

Abraham, born in 1676, probably survived because there are five baptisms by an Abraham between 1705 and 1716, although I have found no marriage:

Abraham baptised 1705

Unknown Hardaker baptised 1705

Mary Hardaker baptised 7 Mar 1707. Mary died of "flux" and was buried on 24 Feb 1725.

Joseph Hardaker baptised 15 May 1712

Unknown male Hardaker baptised April 1716

An Abraham was buried on 12 Dec 1731. As no age was cited on the record it is impossible to know whether this related to the father or his son born in 1705.

3.2 Second generation

The only individual for whom we have further information is Joseph, born in 1712. He married Mary Greenwood on 1 Oct 1733 and then married Ann Sagar (sometimes transcribed as Sharp) on 26 Dec 1745.

Joseph and Mary produced a son, John, baptised on 2 Jun 1734, a child Joseph who was buried in 1740, and Joseph and Ann produced a son David who died in September 1749. The burial record states that David was the son of Joseph of Oxenhope. The only baptism of a David was recorded on 19th July 1749, apparently by a John of Stanbury. It is possible that there were two different Davids, although it is hard to see who the father, John of Stanbury, might have been. Maybe the clerk made a mistake for the baptismal record!

The oldest son John married Mary Binns on 9 Dec 1754. Mary died in 1802 and was buried aged 68 on April 6th. In other words, like John, she was born in 1734. John died four years later and was buried on 7th February 1806, aged 72. John was a weaver and the family lived at High Binns. There is now a High Binns Lane just to the east of Oxenhope.

3.3 Third generation

John and Mary Binns produced at least 9 children between 1755 and 1778. Overlapping these baptisms were those by another John and his wife Sarah Redman. This couple christened children between 1763 and 1772. The two Johns were cousins with the husband of Sarah Redman a descendant of the younger Stephen. Sorting the children of these two couples is problematic bearing in mind that the parish registers at this time did not record the names of the mothers. However, one couple clearly lived in Oxenhope

whilst the other was associated with either Stanbury or Howarth itself. I believe that the family of John and Mary Binns lived in Oxenhope. This division would leave them with the following children:

Hannah baptised 1755
John baptised 1757, died 1798, buried 9th Jan.
James baptised 1760
Mary baptised 1762
Joseph baptised 1764
William baptised 1768
Tempest baptised 1771
Samuel baptised 1773
Richard baptised 1778

3.4 Fourth generation

We have further information about six of the children of John and Mary Binns.

John (1757) married Judith Harmington on 26 December 1780 and produced 4 children:

Hannah baptised 26 Dec 1781
Mary baptised 23 July 1783
Betty baptised 13 May 1785
Mary born about 1792, buried 21 Oct 1792 aged 16.

Mary (1762) presents something of a problem. A Mary, daughter of John of Oxenhope, died in 1767. On the other hand, a Mary Hardaker married James Whitaker on Boxing Day 1785. Mary Whitaker died in 1844 and was buried on 7th June 1844, said to be aged 83. This would imply a birth year of about 1761. I am not sure whether Mary (1762) died in 1785 or survived to marry in 1785.

Joseph (1764) married Susan Hopkinson on 11 February 1782. Susan was buried on June 2nd 1787, closely followed by Joseph on 10th October of the same year. Joseph and Susan had a daughter Rebecca, christened on 18 November 1784. Rebecca married Joseph Wright on 24 July 1803.

William (1768) married Martha Wade on 16 October 1792 and this marriage produced a son called John in 1793. There do not seem to have been any further baptisms by this couple.

Samuel (1773) died in December 1789, rather oddly of "decline" at the ripe old age of 16.

Richard (1778) married Sally Jowett on 29 May 1804 and produced 6 children:

Mary born 3 July 1804
Hannah born 8 Apr 1806
Betty born 11 Sept 1808
James born 3 Oct 1810
John born 8 Sep 1812
Martha born 13 Sep 1814

3.5 Fifth and subsequent generations

Betty Hardaker, the second child of Richard & Sally Jowett, had an illegitimate child, George, on 14 Jan 1826, christened on the 12th February. Betty and George were still in Haworth at the time of the 1841 census, but there is no sign of her after this. George married a Betty Denby in 1845. He was a wool comber but also became a farmer. The couple remained in the Haworth area until at least 1881 but appear to have had no children.

James Hardaker, the third child of Richard and Sally Jowett, married Ruth Wilman on 11th April 1830. James was a weaver. James and Ruth had the following children:

Hannah born Thornton in 1833
Samuel born in Bingley in 1835
Thomas born in Bingley in 1838
James born in Bingley in 1840
Sarah Ann born in Bingley in 1846
John born in Bingley in 1850

Of these children, Samuel (1835) married Martha Uttley on 13 Oct 1856 at Keighley and produced the following children:

Hannah born in Haworth in 1856
Oliver born in Bingley in 1860 - married Elizabeth Hartley 7 Mar 1880, Bingley, 2 children.
James born in Bingley in 1862
Eli born in Bingley in 1864
Hiram born in Bingley in 1865 - married Clara Grange in 1896 Pateley Bridge, 4 children.
Sarah Ann born in Bingley in 1866
Watson born in Bingley in 1867 - emigrated to the USA

John (1812), the fifth child of Richard and Sally Jowett, married Betty Sunderland on 17 October 1831 at Bradford, St. Peter's. This couple had ten children:

Richard b. 1832 Haworth
Jonas b. 1834 Haworth
Harriet b. 1836 Haworth
John b. 1840 Haworth
Sarah b. 1843 Haworth
Hannah b. 1845 Haworth
Elizabeth b. 1848 Bingley
Caroline b. 1850 Bingley
Mary Jane b. 1853 Bingley
Lavinia b. 1856 Bingley

Martha (1814), the final child of Richard and Sally Jowett, married Jonas Ogden (b. 1816) in Haworth on 19 June 1836 and went on to have five children.

4. Descendants of the younger Stephen

4.1 First generation

Stephen Hardaker and his presumed wife Ann Pearson probably produced 8 children between 1692 and 1720 (see above). From this list, we have additional information about 4 of the children:

John Hardaker (1692) married in April 1715. Unfortunately the register does not record the name of his bride. It is possible that John's wife died and that he married Sarah Clayton on 19th September 1734, although the record does not state that he was a widower. John and Sarah Clayton (discussed further below) produced three children between 1734 and 1738 and there is no real indication from the names of their children of John's parentage.

Martha Hardaker (1703) died in 1726 and was buried on 3rd April, unmarried.

Jonas Hardaker (1712) married Annie Crabtree on 6 October 1737. Jonas and Annie produced a son John in 1738. Jonas died in 1793 and was buried in Haworth on 22 January.

Elizabeth Hardaker (1714) may have married John Greenwood on 15 September 1743. This is a little doubtful as Elizabeth would have been nearly 30 when she married, but I cannot find another candidate for this marriage.

4.2 Second generation

John Hardaker (1738) son of Jonas and Annie Crabtree married Sarah Redmond on 19th October 1762. John was a wool comber living in Haworth. His place of residence is important in distinguishing him from his cousin John (1734) and his wife Mary Binns (see above). John and Sarah probably had 6 children:

John born 1763

Sarah born 1766, bapt. 5th March

Rebecca born 1766, bapt. 7th Dec. It is possible that she was a daughter of John & Mary Binns (see above) bearing in mind the closeness of her baptism with that of Sarah.

Joseph born 1768

Rebecca born 1770. Married William Fortune 2 Jan 1788 at Bradford, buried 24 July 1828

Ann born 1772. Ann had an illegitimate son John, baptised on 3 May 1795.

I have no further information about these people

5. Others

Aside from the people mentioned so far, there are several Hardakers from Howarth who do not fit easily into this hypothesis.

As noted above, a John Hardaker married Sarah Clayton on 19 Sep 1734. If John was in his early 20s at the time of the marriage, he would have been born in about 1712. It is equally possible that John was an older man marrying for the second time, hence the discussion above about John, son of Stephen and Ann Pearson born in 1692. Whoever

John was, the marriage produced three children: Mary in 1734, Martha in 1737 and William in 1738.

The son William, a weaver from Oxenhope, married Sarah Fether on 18 May 1760.. William and Sarah produced children James (1761), John (1762), Moses (1765) and Sarah (1768).

Secondly, a John Hardaker married to a woman called Mary, although no marriage has been found, baptised Joseph in 1789, Sally in 1793, Mary in 1797, John in 1798, Hannah in 1803, Betty in 1807, and William in 1811. There are two candidates for this John - the son of William & Sarah Fether noted above, born in 1761, and the son of John and Sarah Redmond born in 1763.

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