

The name Spurin and its various possible spellings

Supplied with great thanks by q.editions

Our ancestors' surnames were variously spelled and the 'rr' and the 'g' appeared in the 17th century. Below is a note [I have written] as an intro to my family history:

"A man who cannot spell his name at least four ways has no imagination." Thomas Jefferson would not have levelled this tongue-in-cheek accusation at any member of the Spurin/Spuring/Spurrin/Spurring family.

Our family surname Spurin, which is still in use with that spelling (sometimes pronounced (Espew-rin¹) or (Espearin¹), has also evolved into (ESpurring¹ (pronounced by my father with a very soft (Eu¹). No doubt Spurin itself evolved from another similar name. There are many historical references, for example, to Spearing, Sperin, Sperrin, Sperron, Speurine, Spurine, Spurn, Spurne, Spurrin, Spuryin, Spyron and other variations.

I have no firm reference for the derivation of the name. Perhaps it was the Saxon verb, 'spurien', meaning to look out (in the sense of standing guard), to explore, or to spy. This word is the derivation of Spurnhead, a promontory in the Humber estuary about 20 miles from Hull, where the Romans built a major coastal watch-tower, the 'Ocellus Promontorium' (promontory eye) described by Ptolemy. The present name is a shortened version of the earlier Spurenhead.

I have found no Spurin reference in the Humberside region. The earliest reference I have found for any similar surname is a **Thomas Sperron**, who was born in about 1484 at an unrecorded English location, and married in 1515. **Mary Sperron** was born in 1527 in Cornwall, and married in that county in 1545. **John Sperrin** was born in 1521 in Piddletown, Dorset, and **Agnes Sperrin** in 1581 in nearby Dorchester.

John Spurrin baptised a daughter, **Katherine**, in 1582 in Newnham, near Hitchin, Hertfordshire, and my earliest reference to the Spurin spelling was recorded in London in 1641, when **Richard Spurin** was married to **Susanna Whiting**, a resident of Eastcheap. However these names are predominantly to be found in the West Country, in Dorset, Somerset, Devon and west to Cornwall.

Symond Spuring was christened in Exeter in 1687. **John Spurin** baptised a daughter, **Ann**, in Shepton Mallet in 1679. In 1706, the Rodd family of Trebartha, Northill, Cornwall, issued a deed to declare uses of a fine and recovery (of rent, presumably) against a number of people including **William Spuring** (with a (Eg¹) and John Ellery, late in occupation of a barn, linney, mowhay and six fields in the parish of Charles, Plymouth. **Elizabeth Spuring** (with a (Eg¹) married **Robert Gad** on 30 November 1710 in Halse, near Taunton. Another **John Spurin** married **Elizabeth** and they had a daughter, **Rebeckah**, in Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire, in 1726.

The earliest ancestor whom we can identify with total confidence is **Richard Spurin**, who was born in Penzance, in the far west of Cornwall, we think in 1731, and became a Master Paviour in Plymouth Dock when the Naval yards there underwent a major expansion 30 years later. Our certainty comes from letters written by his grandson, also **Richard Spurin** (ERS¹), to his grandson, **George William Spurring** (EGW¹), my grandfather.

We hope we have now identified the paviour's father, also **Richard Spurin(g)**, who would have been born c1705, probably in Plymouth Dock in the west of Devon. Clearly there was a longstanding family connection with Plymouth. For example, **Ann Spuring** married **John Matthews** in 1731 in the St Andrew's church in the city.

The name of the man we have taken to be the paviour's father was spelled **Spearing** when he was married to **Esther nee Banwell** in 1730 in the parish church at Stoke Damerel, Plymouth Dock, which was later the venue of a great many Spurin family celebrations.¹ (E

Etcetera and so forth..

All the best Q