

Robert Ellyson



No Picture Available

Born: 1615 Avon, ENG

Married: Elizabeth Gerrard

Died: 28 Sep 1671 VA

Parents: Robert Ellyson & Elizabeth Gray

Dr Robert Ellyson was a trusted and prominent man in Colonial Virginia. He was one of the founders of York County. He was a high Sheriff of James City County; sergeant-at-arms of the House of Burgesses in 1657-58; a leading burgess in 1656, 1659-60. 1660-61, 1663, with the rank of Captain. (See William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine -- VI, page 227; Stanard, Colonial Virginia Register, pp. 72, 75, 77; same IX, p.65; Register of the land Office, Richmond, Virginia, Patent Book No. 7, p.22. Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia, p. 311. Virginia journal of the House of Burgesses, 1619--1658--1659, pp. XXII, 95, 99, and 311. Same Volume 1659/60,--1693 pp. VII and VIII, 21, and 25. Same 1727--40 p. 445.)

Dr Robert Ellyson received as a legacy from his friend Dr Henry Waldron, a library of books -- one of the few in Virginia at that early date.

Robert Ellyson (Ellison) came to Maryland as "Barber Chirurgeon" before 1643 and after holding the office of high sheriff of St. Mary's county, emigrated to Jamestown, Va, where he was high sheriff of James City County and sergeant-at-arms of the house of burgesses in 1657-58, and a leading burgess in 1656, 1660, 1661, 1663, with the rank of captain. He left a daughter Hannah, who married Anthony Armistead, and a son Gerard Robert Ellyson.

Information from online research at: Ancestry.com

Gen.12

ROBERT ELLYSON I

Robert Ellyson was in the Maryland Colony at least by 1642. He was listed in the levy of St. Mary's Hundred of August 2, 1642, when he was assessed thirty pounds of tobacco.¹ He must have lived in St. Mary's County, and also owned land in Kent County, for that same year he was listed as an absent freeman of Kent.² It had become a county that year and Robert's land was likely on the Island of Kent.

Robert was practicing as a chirurgeon and physician at that time, with patients on Kent Island. He was involved in the Provincial Court with several patients who had not paid their bills.³ One of his delinquent accounts belonged to Sir Edmond Ployden who had engaged him to tend two of his maid servants. The entry in the court records read:⁴ "Robert Ellyson, barber-chirurgeon demandeth of Sir Edmond Ploydon, Kent, 1156 pounds tobacco due by account of chirurgery and physick this last summer for Ellen and Jane Stevenson, maidservants of the said Sir. Edmond."

Dr. Ellyson's treatments were probably confined to physick, which may have involved bloodletting, combined with a purgative and some medicinal remedy. If the purgative didn't get the patient, the bloodletting would, perhaps that was why it was difficult to collect his bills. He did also provide his services at an inquest to help determine the cause of death of an infant girl.⁵

Added to Robert's responsibilities were those of sheriff of St. Mary's County, but he held office only briefly. He did investigate a case of high treason against Captain Ingle who had "spoken scandalous words against Prince Rupert". Ingle was arrested, escaped and led a rebellion in which St. Mary's City was sacked and the governor forced to flee.⁶ Fortunately for Robert, he was not the sheriff at the time of the rebellion.

What drew Robert Ellyson to Maryland is not known, nor what then caused him to resettle in Virginia, as he did not seem to be involved in the religious controversy. He was in Maryland as late as February 1644,⁷ but was in York County, Virginia, by 1646, when he was listed as a lawyer there.⁸ Dr. Ellyson became active in the affairs of the county, and may have helped settle several estates. At a court held in January 1646, he was allowed to satisfy his claim for 1030 pounds of tobacco out of the estate of Robert Jackson.⁹

Apparently Robert had more than one place of residence, as he was found in both James City County and Gloucester County, later.¹⁰ He was elected a Burgess from James City County to the General Assembly for the 1655-1656 session.¹¹ In 1656, he was addressed as Lieutenant Colonel Ellyson and was listed among the justices of the Gloucester County court, while the following year, he served as a justice in James City County.¹² He was again elected to serve as a Burgess from James City County.¹³ During his terms he was appointed a member of the committee for the levy and later, on the committee for private causes which dealt with suits appealed from the General Court to the Assembly.¹⁴ He served at one time as sergeant-at-arms for the General Assembly, and was also the high sheriff of James City county.¹⁵

He was referred to variously as Captain, Major, Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel, though not necessarily in correct rank sequence. He must certainly have served in the militia, as the military titles were not generally used without authority. During the period of Dr. Ellyson's service to the colony, he seems to have continued in his practice of medicine, occasionally.

Dr. Robert Ellyson testified that he treated Fortune Perkins, who came to him sorely bruised in his body about the arms and sides, and one of his shoulders dislocated. His shoulder was reduced by Dr. Ellyson and he stated that he did not know how Perkins came by his injuries (August 1661).¹⁶ The entry in the court record described the confrontation in detail. Mr. Perkins had been beaten up by Benjamin Rucker, with the crowd that gathered shouting "Beat out his eyes and do not let him breathe".

Robert was one of those appointed, in 1660, to a committee of the Council and Assembly to make plans to build a state house.¹⁷ The state house was to be the third, and the site chosen was adjoining the lots later owned by Philip Ludwell and Robert Beverley (1694). Walter Chiles also served on the committee.¹⁸ The variety and importance of the positions that Robert Ellyson held indicate that he enjoyed the favor of the leaders of the colony. He was again elected a Burgess, from James City County in 1663.¹⁹ He was appointed to a committee to examine the election of burgesses newly returned, one of the most important committees of the House.²⁰

¹⁰ Gloucester County was cut off from York County in 1651.

In the spring of 1664, Robert Ellyson was ordered, with Edmund Scarborough, the Surveyor General of Virginia, and several others to go to Manakin and confer with the commissioners of Maryland and if possible to adjust the boundary dispute. This concerned the Pocomoke River Valley in Somerset County, Maryland.^{b 21}

By the mid 1660's, it is known that Captain Ellyson owned land in James City County on Ware Creek.²² He had patented land in New Kent County on the narrows of the York River in 1657. At the same time he also patented 200 acres in James City County on the east branch of Burchen Swamp.²³ It would seem that he did not settle on either land patent, as his son was to repatent them later.²⁴

There does not appear to be any conclusive evidence as to whom Robert Ellyson married. Most of the printed accounts state that it is generally assumed that he married Elizabeth, the daughter of Dr. Thomas Gerrard.^{25 c} The basis for this assumption is not clear. Given the naming practices of the time,²⁶ it would seem that he may have married a woman whose maiden name was Gerrard. The surname became a given name for several generations of Robert Ellyson's descendants, among them, first his son, then grandson.²⁷

Dr. Thomas Gerrard did not mention a daughter, Elizabeth, in his will, nor did he name an Ellyson grandchild. Elizabeth Gerrard was named as a headright when Thomas took up land in Maryland, she was not named as a headright when he patented land in Virginia. A printed account of the Gerrard family lists the names of Dr. Gerrard's children: Justinian Gerrard, his eldest son, Thomas, Susanna, Anne, Frances, Temperance, Elizabeth, Jane, John and Mary Gerrard.²⁸

In a postscript to the book by Anne des Cognets, Louis des Cognets included Elizabeth and her three marriages: Nehemiah Blackstone, Ralph Rymmer and Joshua Gilbert.²⁹ Jane appears to have been the only one whose husband's name was not known. All of the other daughters married two, three or four times, except Mary and the will of her husband (Kenelm Cheseldine) is extant.³⁰ It seems further, that the Blackstone husband, of Elizabeth, was living in 1672, when Thomas made his will, as he identified land that he owned as adjoining his son-in-law, Blackstone.³¹

The given name of Robert Ellyson's wife must have been Elizabeth, as Elizabeth Ellyson was one of the sponsors of William Randolph, the son of Henry Randolph, on September 12, 1658.³² She was present at his baptism in James City, and there seems to have been no other Ellyson in James City at that time. There remains the possibility that Robert married a sister of Dr. Thomas Gerrard.

Robert Ellyson had two known children, GERRARD ROBERT ELLYSON and Hannah. In April 1680 GERRARD ROBERT ELLYSON recorded the patent his father had made in 1657, for the 577 acres in New Kent County. He asserted his claim to the land by identifying himself as "sonne and Heire" of Robert Ellyson.³³ In July 1698, Hannah Armistead deeded land that was given her by her father, Robert Ellyson, to her son-in-law, John West.³⁴

GERRARD ROBERT was still under age in October of 1672,³⁵ when the court of James City County ordered that Mr. Thomas Viccars be the guardian of Gerrard Robert Ellyson, son and orphan of Major Ellyson. It seems that Gerrard Robert did not come of age until just before he repatented his father's land, thus he would have been born about 1658 or 1659. Whether Hannah was older, is not certain, but she was married and had acquired a son-in-law by 1698, so she must have been born by 1660 or before. Robert Ellyson's marriage, therefore, must have taken place about the mid-1650's.

No information has survived about Robert Ellyson's activities after his assignment to help settle the boundary dispute with Maryland. He may have returned to his practice of medicine, for he was referred to in a General Court proceeding by his title of Dr. Ellyson. On September 28, 1671 the General Court ordered that Capt. George Lydall pay a debt of 593 pounds of tobacco from Dr. Ellyson's estate.³⁶

^b Governor Calvert of Maryland met with Governor Berkeley in 1666 and the region in dispute became a part of Somerset County.

^c Dr. Thomas Gerrard settled in Maryland in 1638. He patented large tracts of land and among those he transported were his wife, Susanna (SNOW) and his five children: Justinian, Elizabeth, Frances, Susanna and Temperance. Two of his land holdings were "St. Clement's Manor" and St. Clement's Island, 11,400 acres, and "Westwood Manor", 1600 acres. In all he patented 32,343 acres of land.

Dr. Gerrard was, at one time, Privy Councillor, but because of a controversy with a Jesuit missionary, he was deposed from the Council and banished from Maryland. He had already patented land in 1650, in the area of Virginia that became Westmoreland County. He named as headrights, his wife and children: Susanna, Temperance, Frances, Justinian and John. He and his wife settled on Machotick Creek. His wife, Susanna, died before January 1672, for Thomas married the widow, Rose Tucker by that date. Dr. Thomas Gerrard made his will on February 1, 1672 and died before November 19, 1673, when his will was recorded in Westmoreland County.