

Gandy – an old established shoemaking family

Throughout the 19th century, census, church and other records for the Warrington area contain a wealth of evidence for the Gandy's involvement in the shoe-making trade and other trades with links to footwear, such as hosiery. For example John Gandy was a hosier in The Market Place and Golden Square in Warrington in the 1820`s while Mrs Mary Gandy served the nobility, gentry and clergy in Church Street and Horsemarket Street. (Information provided by Sue Kinsella from trade directories).

The connection between the Gandy family and shoes is even older. I have found Gandys who were shoemakers in the 18th century, such as William Gandy of Prescot, who married Sarah Lingham in 1767 and John Gandy, also shoemaker of Prescot, who married Jane Whittle in 1768. Thomas Gandy, cloger, married Mary Houghton in 1826. James Gandy shoemaker married Ann Smethurst in 1761. Thos Gandy shoemaker married Ann Mason in 1768. Joseph Gandy shoemaker married Betty Wright in 1769. James Gandy shoemaker and wife Ann – christened son James in 1779 and daughter Lydia in 1782. Joseph Gandy, John Gandy, Thomas, James shoemakers carried on 1785, 1787, 1788, 1790,1795, 1796, - 1808. Warrington volunteers raised in 1798 to help meet the threat of invasion from Napoleonic France. 539 men serving in 1807, including James Gandey, Warrington, shoemaker.

Another speciality of the Gandy cobblers was clogs:

“When you talk of clogs in Warrington, people immediately think of the Gandy's. And when you mention that name to-day you are referring to 70-year-old Mr. John Gandy, in Buttermarket Street, and his cousin Mr. Douglas Gandy, of Mersey Street — only remaining cloggers in Warrington, and the last of a line of cloggers who began a family business in 1818.” Mr. Douglas Gandy took over his business from his father Mr. William Gandy, who founded it in 1871.

The main product of the Gandy cloggers were a hand-made wooden clogs, a Lancashire version of the wooden sabot which came to England with Flemish weavers. The clog was used in the tan-yards, factories laundries, breweries and works in the town.

“The tiny shop and workrooms at the corner of Mersey Street and Rose and Crown Street date back to around 1850, and over the years tens of thousands of hand-made clogs of all shapes and sizes have been assembled there. These were once sold all over the north to factory and textile workers, and in recent times have been exported to America, Jamaica and other countries.¹”

¹ (Clog shop in Museum Street. Plans to preserve Warrington's last remaining clogmaker's shop - Douglas Gandy - revealed in Warrington Guardian 23rd of January 1970).