

The Apocryphal Anthony Family of London

We can trace the Anthony family farthest back among our ancestors. But how far back is debatable. Hence the ‘apocryphal’ nature of the family’s origins in London.

Charles L. Anthony is an oft-cited family historian, with his 400-page history of the Anthony family published in 1904. In that book he laid out the descendants of the original Anthony emigrant, John Anthony, who sailed from England to Rhode Island in 1634.

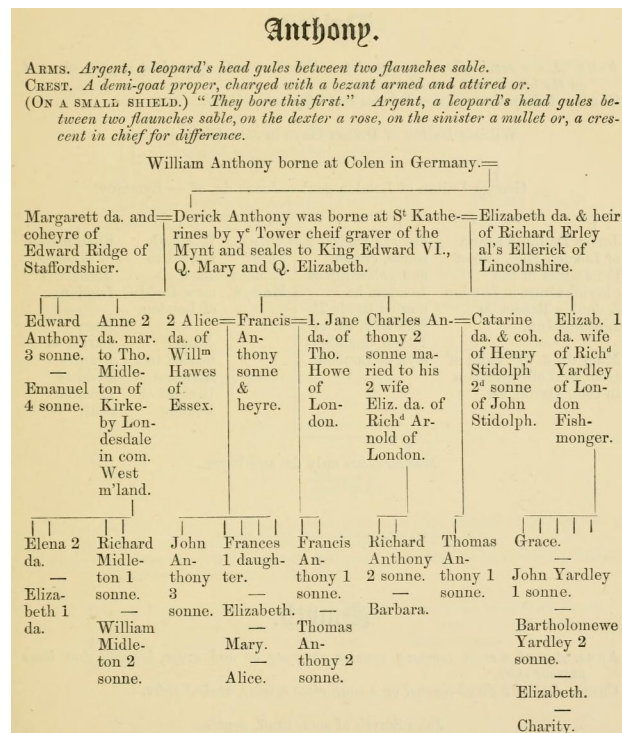
Looking farther back, our historian Charles posits that “Our direct line starts with William Anthony, 1495, Cologne, Germany, who went to London, England...”¹

Charles admits in his book that “*the line of connection between this ancient family and John Anthony, the emigrant, has not been established and fortified by complete and satisfactory evidence, but numerous circumstances point in this direction.*”²

So it is that we present what we know of the purported family line in London, but we also caution that the evidence linking them to our direct line of ancestors has not been documented and appears more speculative than substantive.

William Anthony

William Anthony, born in Cologne, Germany, in the later 15th century,³ moved to London, England, by at least the 1520s, evidenced by his son Derick being born around that time at St. Katherine’s by the Tower.⁴ Some biographies of the family claim William was a goldsmith but I’ve found no corroborating evidence of this.⁵



From The Visitation of London showing Anthony family lineage

Derick Anthony

William’s son Derick Anthony became the “chief graver of the mynt and seales to King Edward VI, Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth.”⁶ As the Royal Mint’s Chief Engraver from 1552 to 1596⁷ he was responsible for overseeing the preparation of coin dies⁸ as well as the great seals of England, Ireland, and Wales, and the royalty’s signet seals.⁹ In some sources he is named as “capital sculptor of the monies of the Tower,”¹⁰ and in others as “Goldsmith Jeweller to Queene Eliz.”¹¹

At the time the Royal Mint produced the realm’s coinage within the Tower of London along what came to be known as Mint Street between the inner and outer walls.

According to the Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) web site, “working at the Mint was largely a family affair. Boys in a Mint family would be

apprenticed at a young age and work with generations of their families.”¹² This was true for the Anthony family: Derick’s son Charles took over as Chief Engraver after his father’s death. And after Charles came Thomas Anthony, Derick’s grandson.¹³

The HRP site continues, “By the Tudor period in the sixteenth century, Mint officials were given lodgings on Mint Street, so they could be near their work and [to] keep an eye on security. Many Mint workers lived their lives at the Tower, worshipping every Sunday at the chapel of St Peter ad Vincula on Tower Green.”¹⁴ It is quite feasible Derick raised his family on the Tower grounds.



Derick obtained a family coat of arms in 1559 (depiction on the left), a consequence of which was subsequent generations had to document their lineage in order to continue using the family arms. It's through this documentation — called the *Visitation* [i.e, the visitation and inspection of validating Herald officials] — that we have a lineage of the early Anthony family in London, shown in the extract on the previous page. According to the



An English crown (five-shilling coin) dated the year that Derick Anthony became the Chief Engraver. Image from www.royalmintmuseum.org.uk

Visitation, Derick married twice: first Elizabeth Erley and then Margaret Ridge, having five children in all. The eldest of Derick's children was Francis, who is noted as “sonne and heyre” (son and heir). We know that the second son, Charles, followed in Derick's footsteps.

Francis, however, had other plans.

Francis Anthony (1550-1623)

A contemporary of William Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth • A son of the Chief Engraver of the Royal Mint at the Tower of London • A graduate of Cambridge University • A physician • An investor in the colonial Virginia Company • A man of charity and modesty

Yet Francis was also a man with little regard for authority, who was disinherited by his father, and called a quack by his peers.

Francis Anthony, born in London, England in the mid-sixteenth century, was a multi-faceted man deserving mention not only as possibly one of the earliest known ancestors in our family tree, but also because his story has interesting parallels with one of his purported descendants, the 18th century Paul Anthony in America.

Francis Anthony was christened in April 1550 at St. Mary Woolnoth Church¹⁵ in central London. As a young lad he was “carefully instructed in the first rudiments of learning while at home,”¹⁶ which undoubtedly meant learning about precious (for coins) and non-precious (for dies) metals from his father. At Cambridge University he “applied himself for many years to the theory and practice of chemistry.”¹⁷

Perhaps because his father was a goldsmith, Francis seems to have developed a single-minded fascination with gold. He believed it was perfectly balanced among nature's four elements of hot, cold, moist, and dry, and “so compounded to the perfection of this body, that it constantly persisteth in the fire without diminution. From this proportionall mixture of Elements resulteth a

termperament of supreme mediocritie.”¹⁸ And thus it was uniquely suited to rectifying “*all and every such distemper.*”¹⁹

He became convinced of gold’s power as a universal medicine, “*such is the virtue thereof, that Nature itself being strengthened and comforted above the malice of the offending humors and the disease, will expel the burden of those humors by the most convenient passages which that case may require, whether it by by siege, vomit, urine, sweat, or other exitures.*”²⁰ In short, all the distempers could be vomited, shat, urinated or sweat out of the body by means of his gold elixir.

Francis began administering, without benefit of a medical license, a formula of *Aurum Potabile*, or drinkable gold, to patients. In response, the College of Physicians of London in 1600 began a series of censorial hearings, running over sixteen years, which he largely ignored, though in the first one he confessed that he’d been practicing without a license for six months, and he’d “cured 20 with purging and vomiting physic, gave others a diaphoretic (sweat inducer) prepared from gold and mercury.”²¹

He was forbidden to practice, fined, and even imprisoned, but nothing succeeded in stopping him. A 1601 entry from the hearings shows:²²

Francis Anthony appeared again on a charge of practising. Indeed he confessed that he had given a pill to an epileptic: the same pill he had given to Paul Samond who was dead within three days. Because he had practised against the Statutes and against his promise, he was fined £5. As he refused to pay this fine he was committed to prison with a fine of £20.

Other entries were similarly colorful, including:

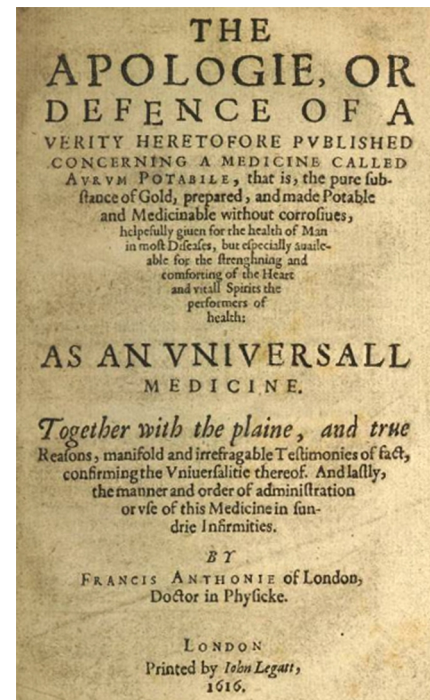
1602: *Had lately treated Ward and Roger Cotton's servant, leaving one dead and the other dangerously ill.*

1604: *Dr Taylior accused Anthony of treating Sir Edward Semor & his wife within the last 6-7 weeks, and also of making a woman's teeth fall out. Poe said that Anthony had caused the death of Captain Lee.*

1606: *Thomas Pattenson told the President & Censors that Anthony had given Mr Martin, priest, 'a chemical medicament' causing vomiting, diarrhoea and death.*

1607: *Pattenson, Susan Martin & William Gylley accused Anthony of causing the death of Martin of Gutter Lane. Martin had blamed Anthony for his death, and Anthony had declared that the cathartic medicament he'd used would either kill or cure—a final attempt.*

Perhaps to deflect further charges, Francis earned an M.D. from Cambridge in 1608.²³ Nevertheless “*the controversy over aurum potabile was continued by the faculty, but this only further advertised the remedy and increased Anthony's practice.*”²⁴ In fact he “derived a considerable fortune”²⁵ from his concoction and its ministrations. This despite the fact that at trial in 1609 “an ounce of gold was given to Anthony, which, by his method, he failed to dissolve.”²⁶ His detractors concluded that “it is evident that as there described, the ultimate product could not contain any gold.” Furthermore, “*the efficacy of the remedy, if any, as a cordial, was possibly due to certain ethers which would be formed in the process of distillation, and also to the good canary wine in which it was ultimately dissolved.*”²⁷



Title page of Francis Anthony's book explaining and defending the universal medicine called aurum potabile

A biographer of the man believes one of the reasons Anthony was able to overcome widespread criticism was because of his “unblemished character in private life.” He was reportedly a man of unaffected piety, untainted probity, easy address, great modesty, and boundless charity.²⁸

In response to his numerous critics, Anthony published a defense of his *aurum potabile* citing ancient classical support for gold-based medicine, and in which he documented its successes on patients. Nothing, of course, was mentioned about its failures.

A later *Visitation* mentions that Francis was disinherited by his father.²⁹ If true, Francis’s financial success as an “empiric,” or quack, easily made up for any loss of inheritance.

Francis Anthony married at least twice, but documentation is sparse and conflicting on the subject of wives and children. Two of his sons, John and Charles, became medical doctors. There were at least four other children: another son (also Francis, who died the same year as his father) and three daughters.

Francis Anthony lived steps away from St. Bartholomew’s Church in London. He practiced widely, but maintained his house in St. Bartholomew’s Close on the east side of the church on what was called Close Gate Row, and is now Kinghorn Street. The church still stands, an impressive example of Norman architecture. When Francis Anthony died in 1623 at age 73 he was buried beneath the floor of the north aisle and a plaque to him was mounted on an adjacent wall by his son John. It can still be found in the church.

For a man who had a reputation of ‘boundless charity,’ Francis only left a few shillings for the poor in his will. The paltry sum might have been enough to buy a round for the parishioners at the *Hand and Shears*^a pub near his house.³⁰ But everything of value — his



Exterior view of St. Bartholomew's north entrance



Interior of St. Bartholomew's with Anthony plaque on wall over chair, far left side of photo (from Google street view)

properties, houses, possessions, and shares in the Virginia Company — went to his family. He divided his books equally between his sons the doctors but gave his wearing apparel to the elder of the two, John. He also divided his medicines between them.³¹

Contemporaries and biographers called Francis an empiric, a polite synonym for quack.

Ultimately one has to wonder if Francis was serious in his faith in the healing power of his golden elixir or if he was a charlatan,



selling gullible folks a cure-all which under examination didn’t contain the gold after which it was named. We can’t know, which deliciously adds to the layers of mystery, or even mysticism, of his story.

a The pub, established in 1532, was at the end of the block on Francis’s street. It was where the London mayor kicked off the Cloth Fair by cutting the first piece of cloth: the origin of the modern-day ritual of ribbon cutting.

The memorial plaque in St. Bartholomew's reads:

Sacred to the memory of that worthy & lerned
Francis Anthony, Doctor in Physick

There needs no verse to Beautify thy praise
Or keepe in memory thy name thy spotles name.
Religion, vertue, & thy skil, did raise
A threefold pillar to thy lasting fame
Though poisonous envye ever sought to blame,
Or hyde the fruits of thy intention
Yet shall they all commend that high desygne
Of purest gold to make a medicine
That feele thy helpe by that thy rare invention.

He dyed the 26th of May 1623 of his age 74

His loving sonne John Anthony doctor in physic
Left this remembrance of his sorrow. He dyed
28 of April 1655 being aged 70 yeares and was
Buried near this place and left behind him 1 sone
and 3 daughters.



John Anthony (ca. 1585-1655)

John, Francis's eldest son and the one who erected the plaque in St. Bartholomew's, continued the medical practice of his father,^b selling *aurum potable* and, according to his biographers, living handsomely off of it. He, like his father, obtained degrees from Cambridge and lived in St. Bartholomew Close. In 1628 John was among the more generous of the 37 subscribers funding the rebuilding of the St. Bartholomew church tower.³²

Literate like his father, he wrote *The Comfort of the Soul: Laid Down by Way of Meditation Upon Some Heads of Christian Religion, Very Profitable for Every True Christian*. The book prescribed meditation (as opposed to his father's medication) as a "divine physic to prevent diseases not yet entered upon the soul, and to cure those maladies which have already seized upon the spirit."³³ Chapter headings lead to the impression it is religious rather than medical in nature. As one genealogist put it, "in addition to caring for bodies he cared for souls."³⁴

Upon his death in 1655 he was "buried with his father in the church of St. Bartholomew the Great."³⁵

The Nature of Our Apocrypha

Charles Anthony, the aforementioned family historian, believes that Dr. John Anthony, above, had a son named John who was born in 1607, was an innkeeper, and lived in Hampstead near London before leaving for Rhode Island in 1634 on the *Hercules*.

b Per the Royal College of Physicians' *Lives of the Fellows* John "succeeded to the more reputable part of his fathers practice."

Dr. John Anthony did in fact have a son named John,³⁶ but no additional information is available to clearly identify him as the John Anthony who sailed to New England.

One of Charles's sources was probably James Savage's *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England*, published in 1860,³⁷ which addresses John Anthony of Portsmouth, Rhode Island thusly:

“for his coming we have perfect kn[owledge] that he took o[ath] of alleg[iance] and suprem[ency] 24 Mar. 1634, with intent to emb[ark] in the Mary and John, but was delay[ed] for passage in the Hercules a few days after. He had liv[ed] in the beautif[ul] village of Hempstead, near London, and d[ie]d 28 July 1675, aged 68.”

However, it's not clear where Charles got the idea that this John Anthony was the son of Dr. John Anthony living in St. Bartholomew Close. He says “*numerous circumstances point in this direction*” without spelling out the details and rationale.

The connection to Dr. John Anthony is possible of course, but it isn't definitive. And in the opinion of at least one genealogist it isn't even likely.³⁸

So we are left in doubt on the lineage of our Anthony family prior to its arrival in North America. However we include the apocryphal London Anthony family history here for background, in case a future genealogist can make an iron-clad, or perhaps we should say gold-plated, connection to them as additional information becomes available.

We also include it because Francis Anthony's story resonates with that of one of his purported descendants, Paul Anthony. Paul Anthony (1761-1841) of Massachusetts Bay and later LeRay, New York, was also a religiously inclined alchemist: in this case, one given to divine revelations and a belief that his farm land included a mineral substance that leeching could turn into beer and make his family immensely rich.³⁹ Unlike his supposed London ancestors, however, he never achieved wealth and fame.^c Whether Francis and Paul Anthony are related is debatable, but there nevertheless appears to be a certain 'kindred' spirit between the two.

c Unless one considers that the community where he lived in LeRay, New York, became known as Bedlam (probably because Paul and many of his children exhibited insanity) and a road in the area continues with that name to this day. That could be considered a form of lasting fame, perhaps.

- 1 Charles L. Anthony, *Genealogy of the Anthony from 1495 to 1904, Traced from William Anthony, Cologne, Germany, to London, England, John Anthony, a Descendant, from England to America*, Sterling, Illinois: Charles L. Anthony, 1904, p 11. Available for viewing on the internet at <https://archive.org/details/genealogyofantho00anth/page/n8>
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid. Birth year of William Anthony is unknown but one of the book's sources says William was "living certainly in 1495." p. 14.
- 4 Joseph Howard and George Armytage, ed., *The Visitation of London in the Year 1568: Taken by Robert Cooke, Clarenceux King of Arms, and Since Augmented Both with Descents and Arms, Volume I*, London: Taylor and Co, Printers, for The Harleian Society, 1869, p 43. <https://archive.org/stream/visitationoflond00cook#page/42/mode/2up>
- 5 Given the nature of the minting trade — that the skills were frequently passed down through the family — it seems possible that William was a goldsmith in Germany and came to London to work at the Royal Mint.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Wikipedia, "Chief Engraver of the Royal Mint," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_Engraver_of_the_Royal_Mint, accessed 8 Feb 2019.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Christopher Edgar Challis, *The Tudor Coinage*, Manchester University Press, 1978, footnote to page 42, <https://books.google.com/books?id=0hjSAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA42&lpg=PA42#v=onepage&q&f=false>, accessed 8 Feb 2019.
- 10 Barclay Head, Herbert Grueber, and Edward Rapson, Ed., *The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society, Fourth Series, Vol. VIII*, London: Bernard Quaritch, 1908, "Nicholas Hilliard, 'Embossor of Gold Medals,'" p 343. <https://books.google.com/books?id=XQENAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA343&lpg=PA343#v=onepage&q=anthony&f=false>
- 11 Frederick Blaydes, ed., *The Visitations of Bedfordshire, Annis Domini 1566, 1582, and 1634: Made by William Harvey, Robert Cooke, and George Owen. A list of pedigrees entered at the visitation of 1669*. London: for The Harleian Society, 1884, pp 75-76. <https://archive.org/stream/visitationsofbed1921harv#page/n95/mode/2up>
- 12 Historic Royal Palaces, "Tower of London: Life on Mint Street." <https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/explore/the-towers-mint/life-on-mint-street/#gs.lojPD8Vq>, accessed 12 Feb 2019.
- 13 Wikipedia, "Chief Engraver of the Royal Mint."
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ancestry.com. London, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538-1812 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. Originally from the London Metropolitan Archives; London, England; Church of England Parish Registers, 1538-1812; Reference Number: P69/MRY15/A/001/MS07635/001
- 16 Chalmers, Alexander. *The General Biographical Dictionary*. Volume 2. London: J. Nichols and Son, 1812-1817, p312-315.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Francis Anthony, *The apologie, or defence of a verity heretofore published concerning a medicine called Aurum potable, that is, the pure substance of gold, prepared, and made potable and medicinable without corrosives, helpfully given for the health of man in most diseases, but especially availeable for the strengthning and comforting of the Heart and vital Spirits the performers of health: As An Universall Medicine*, London: John Legatt, 1616, p 6. Available on line at <https://archive.org/details/b30339479/page/6>
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Anthony, *The apologie*, p 16.
- 21 E. A. Webb, *The Records of St. Bartholomew's Priory and of the Church and Parish of St. Bartholomew the Great, West Smithfield, Volume II*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 284. https://archive.org/details/recordsofstbarth02webb_0/page/284
- 22 Margaret Pelling and Frances White, 'ANTHONY, Francis', in *Physicians and Irregular Medical Practitioners in London 1550-1640 Database* (London, 2004), British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-physicians/1550-1640/anthony-francis> [accessed 9 February 2019]
- 23 J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, London, England: Cambridge University Press, 1922-1954. Ancestry.com. Cambridge University Alumni, 1261-1900 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 1999.
- 24 Webb, *The Records of St. Bartholomew's*, p. 284.
- 25 Sir Leslie Stephen, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1921-1922, Volume 1, London: Oxford University Press, 1922, p. 519-520. Ancestry.com. *Dictionary of National Biography*, Volumes 1-22 [database on-line]. Provo,

- UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010, accessed 9 Feb 2019
- 26 Ibid.
 - 27 Ibid.
 - 28 Chalmers, *The General Biographical Dictionary*, p. 314.
 - 29 Frederick Blaydes, ed., *The Visitations of Bedfordshire, Annis Domini 1566, 1582, and 1634: Made by William Harvey, Robert Cooke, and George Owen. A list of pedigrees entered at the visitation of 1669*. London: for The Harleian Society, 1884, pp 75-76.
 - 30 <https://archive.org/stream/visitationsofbed1921harv#page/n95/mode/2up>
 - 30 Francis left 40 shillings to the parish poor. The cost of a quart of beer in the later 16th century was about a pence (<http://medieval.ucdavis.edu/120D/Money.html>). At two pints a person, 40 shillings would buy roughly 480 people a night at the pub. The Hand and Shears pub was at the end of the street, King Street, where Francis lived. The pub is still there, though the building isn't original. An interesting history of the pub can be found at <https://alondoninheritance.com/londonpubs/hand-and-shears/>, among other sites.
 - 31 Ancestry.com. England & Wales, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2013. Original data: Prerogative Court of Canterbury: Wills of Selected Famous Persons. Digitized images. Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Series PROB 1. The National Archives, Kew, England
 - 32 Webb, *The Records of St. Bartholomew's Priory*, p 535.
 - 33 Chalmers, *The General Biographical Dictionary*, p 315.
 - 34 WikiTree, "John Anthony MD (1585-bef. 1655)," <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Anthony-269>, accessed 21 Feb 2019.
 - 35 John Watkins, *An Universal Biographical and Historical Dictionary: Containing a Faithful Account of the Lives, Actions, and Characters of the Most Eminent Persons of All Ages and All Countries*, London: Davison and Gillet, 1800.
 - 36 As mentioned in the will of Richard Arnold, whose master was Dr. John Anthony. "To my loving master John Anthony, Doctor in Physicke, a silver can of which I entreat his acceptance. To Samuel and John, the sons of my said master, unto each of them a silver wine-taster..." See Henry F. Waters, "Genealogical Gleanings in England," *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 1894, Volume XLVIII (Vol 48)*, Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1894, p. 375. Available at Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/newenglandhistor48wate/page/375>, accessed 21 Feb 2019.
 - 37 James Savage, *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England: Showing Three Generations of Those Who Came Before May, 1692, on the Basis of Farmer's Register, Vol. I*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1860, p59.
 - 38 WikiTree, "John Anthony (1607-1675)," <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Anthony-55#>, accessed 21 Feb 2019.
 - 39 "New York Probate Records, 1629-1971," images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GYCZ-9TL?cc=1920234&wc=Q7P8-T3J%3A213304001%2C214932301> : 28 May 2014), Jefferson > image 367 of 454 (page 356); county courthouses, New York.