
RICE family, of Newton and Dynevor, Carmarthenshire

Descended from [Gruffudd ap Nicolas](#), the family, later known as the Rices, reached their highest point of wealth and influence in the person of [Sir Rhys ap Thomas](#). His grandson, Sir RHYS AP GRUFFYDD, who married, in 1524, lady Catherine Howard, daughter of the 2nd duke of Norfolk, was executed for treason in 1531. The evidence for his guilt was slight and his real offence was probably his Catholicism and his opposition to Anne Boleyn. His fall brought his great possessions, said to have been worth £10,000 a year in land and £30,000 in personal property, into the hands of the Crown. The next three generations of the family attempted to rebuild the family fortunes and they succeeded in regaining some of the forfeited lands, though by far the greater part was disposed of by successive Tudor monarchs.

Sir Rhys's son, GRIFFITH RICE (c. 1530 - 1584), having obtained from Mary in 1554-5 a grant of some of his father's forfeited possessions in Pembrokeshire, lost them again in 1557 when he was convicted of the murder of Mathew Walshe in county Durham. On the accession of Elizabeth he was pardoned and, in 1560, the forfeited lands were again restored to him, together with other lands in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, including the manor of Newton, of the total yearly value of £105 10s. 4d. Further leases of his father's lands followed in 1563 and 1580. He appears regularly as one of the selected Carmarthenshire justices of the peace to whom special tasks were allotted by the Council of the Marches, and he was mayor of Carmarthen in 1571, and high sheriff of Carmarthenshire in 1567-83. In 1581 he and [Sir John Perot](#) were obliged by the Privy Council to enter into recognizances of £1,000 each to keep the peace.

Griffith Rice's son, WALTER RICE (c. 1560 - 1611), was Member of Parliament for Carmarthenshire, 1584-5, for Carmarthen, 1601 and 1604-11, and high sheriff for Carmarthenshire, 1586. Described as 'the Queen's Servant,' he obtained further grants of lands in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire in 1594 (rental £47 19s. 9½d.), and his marriage to Elizabeth, daughter of [Sir Edward Mansell](#) of Margam, probably gave him the influential support of his brother-in-law, [admiral Sir Robert Mansell](#). [Lewys Dwnn](#), whose pedigree of the family was signed by Walter Rice, described him as 'one of James I pensioners.' He was knighted in 1603.

In the next generation, HENRY RICE (c. 1590 - c. 1651), continued the effort to recover lost ground. In 1625 and 1629 he petitioned Charles I for a grant of such of his greatgrandfather's estates as remained in the hands of the Crown, claiming that Mary and Elizabeth had promised as much to his father and grandfather. He was certainly the anonymous author of the '*Life of Rhys ap Thomas*' and the defence of Rhys ap Gruffydd, published in the *Cambrian Register*, vols. i and ii (1793 and 1796), and they were part of his campaign for the recovery of the family estate. There is no evidence that either he or his son, EDWARD RICE, played any part in the Civil Wars; both held lands in Dynevor and Newton in 1651, and the latter was high sheriff of Carmarthenshire in 1663. The date of his death is uncertain and his estates passed to his brother, WALTER RICE, who was nominated deputy-lieutenant of Brecknock in 1674.

Walter Rice

was dead by 1681 when col. Theophilus Oglethorpe (*D.N.B.*) petitioned the Crown for a grant of the Crown's remainder in the lands granted in 1560 to Griffith Rice and his heirs in tail male. The then holder was GRIFFITH RICE (1667 - 1729), son of Walter, and the lands in question were worth £300 per annum. Griffith Rice, however, lived to have heirs and he was high sheriff of Carmarthenshire, 1694, and Member of Parliament for Carmarthenshire, 1701-10. His son, EDWARD RICE, unsuccessfully contested the Carmarthenshire seat in 1722.

His son, GEORGE RICE (1724 - 1779), played a fairly prominent part in the political life of the times. He was a member of the group of Carmarthenshire Whigs who, led by [Griffith Philipps of Cwmgwili](#) (see [Philipps of Cwmgwili](#)), engaged in a violent struggle with the Tories of west Wales, led by [Sir John Philipps](#) of Picton (see [Philipps of Picton](#)) to control the borough of Carmarthen between 1738 and 1764. He was Member of Parliament for Carmarthenshire, 1754-79. During the long Whig monopoly of power, which ended with the death of George II in 1760, he was a follower of the Pelhams. Appointed lord-lieutenant of Carmarthenshire in 1755, and colonel in the Carmarthenshire Militia in 1759, he was one of Newcastle's political managers in Wales in 1755 and received £173 'for Radnorshire ' from Newcastle's secret service fund. With the end of the Whig monopoly, he transferred his allegiance to new leaders; appointed lord-commissioner of the Board of Trade and foreign plantations (salary, £1,000 a year) by Newcastle in 1761, he held the post under successive ministries until April 1770, when lord North appointed him treasurer of the king's chamber. He died in office in 1779. He had married, in 1756, Cecil, only child of [William, 1st earl Talbot](#), lord steward of the Royal Household, who, in 1780, was created [earl Talbot](#) and [baron Dynevor](#), with special remainder to his daughter. Their son, GEORGE TALBOT RICE (1765 - 1852), who became 3rd baron Dynevor, Tory Member of Parliament for Carmarthenshire, 1790-3, and his son, GEORGE RICE TREVOR (1795 - 1869), who inherited the estates of the Trevor family at Glynde, Sussex, was Tory Member of Parliament for Carmarthenshire, 1820-31 and 1832-52. The family estates in 1883 consisted of 7,208 acres in Carmarthenshire, 3,299 in Glamorganshire, and 231 in England : total value £12,562 a year.

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