

A search to the origin and meaning of the name Querner

What was known:

The first Querner came from Hamburg to Medenblik in the Netherlands around 1788. He was a shipwright/carpenter (Publication from 'West Friese Families:, Grofsmeden, broodbakkers en schoolmeesters: DE FAMILIE QUERNER', Sept 1981, no. 3, pp. 65-79).

My parents got some information while travelling in Sweden (around 1954), that the name *Querner* had something to do with milling, since it was an old word in Swedish and/or Finnish.

Around 1995 internet started and a Querner living in USA contacted me. His predecessors came also from Germany. At that time, there were about one hundred names of Querner in the USA telephone directory.

Since the information on the internet is growing recently I decided to start again a small search.

Internet search Querner (2013)

I started the search on German websites

Statistik: Zahlen zum Nachnamen 'Querner'

In Deutschland gibt es 109 Telefonbucheinträge zum Namen Querner und damit ca. 290 Personen mit diesem Namen. Diese leben in 61 Städten und Landkreisen. Die meisten Anschlüsse sind in Dresden gemeldet, nämlich 17.

Kasus	Singular	Plural
Nominativ	Querner	(die) Querners
Genitiv	Querners	(der) Querners
Dativ	Querner	(den) Querners
Akkusativ	Querner	(die) Querners

<http://de.wiktionary.org/wiki/Querner>:

Querner Berufsname von mittelniederdeutsch **quern** „Hand- oder Tretmühle“.

Sounds familiar what my parents heard in Sweden. Furthermore the name Querner in Germany is only a family name.

Search on quern

Quern Stones, used for grinding corn, seem to have been produced on Wharnccliffe Crag (UK) since the Iron Age and continued at least into Roman times.

Information on *Wharnccliffe Crag*s:

Wikipedia: The rocks at the north-western end of Wharnccliffe Crag have been quarried to produce quern-stones as long ago as the Iron Age, continuing into the period of the Roman occupation of Britain. The name Wharnccliffe actually evolved from the term "quern cliff". The process of quern production has left behind considerable evidence in the area of the crags, including work flooring and track ways as well as many abandoned querns. In August 1996 an accidental heather fire burned away much of the vegetation over an area of 8

hectares, revealing many more quern-stones than had originally thought present. A survey by English Heritage in 2000 uncovered around 2300 stones in the 8-hectare area, leading to an estimate that there could be around **8000 quern-stones** in the quarry area.

Search on *quern-stones*:

Wikipedia: Quern-stones are stone tools for hand-grinding a wide variety of materials. They were used in pairs. The lower, stationary, stone is called a quern, while the upper mobile stone is called a hand stone. They were first used in the Neolithic to grind cereals into flour. Quern-stones have been used throughout the world to grind materials, the most important of which was usually grain to make flour for bread-making. They were generally replaced by millstones once mechanised forms of milling appeared, particularly the water mill and the windmill, although animals were also used to operate the millstones. However, in many non-Westernised, non-mechanised cultures they are still manufactured and used regularly and have only been replaced in many parts of the world in the last century or so.

Further information found:

Saddle querns (2 figures below) were used for grinding corn. Grain was put on the concave lower stone and broken by moving the long-rounded stone backwards and forwards over it. They were replaced by rotary querns in the Roman period and then by water-powered mills (source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/eYP-aS2vRiy4TIEgwzNCcQ>).

There are lots of informative plaques inside the mill, and the chance to try grinding flour by hand using a quern.



MM 11489 :: Tool, Millstone, Quern

Saddle quern, part of hand mill. Smooth, slightly concave upper surface. Red sandstone.

Another search gave: Quern (Danish: Kværn) is a town in Northern Germany

Danish websites, search on *Kværn*:

mekanisk eller elektrisk maskine hvori et materiale passerer gennem en roterende anordning så det findeles eller males til pulver (translated: mechanical or electrical machine in which a material passes through a rotating device so it is comminuted or ground into powder, source: www.ordnet.dk/ddo/ordbog?query=kværn)

Grind your own flour: In the Thing-hall in Ribe town (Denmark), you may try to grind flour on the **quern**.

Swedish dictionary (also in Finnish):

A mill for grinding corn, especially a hand-mill made of two circular stones (www.gratis-ordbok.se)

Dutch dictionary:

Quern is not found! Only the city in North Germany is mentioned.

French dictionary:

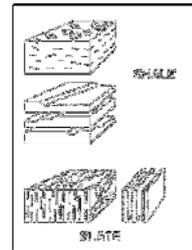
<http://dictionnaire.reverso.net/francais-definition/querner>

querner diviser un bloc de pierre ou de schiste avant sa découpe (vertaling: dividing a stone block or shale before it is cut)

...../quernerie:

lieu où les ouvriers divisaient les blocs de pierre ou de schiste avant leur (where workers divided blocks of stone or slate before)

Briser un bloc de schiste ardoisier en morceaux réguliers; ou répartons; au moyen du bouc (breaking a block of shale slate in regular pieces)



In French the name *querner* means a person who breaks stones (in a quarry?), a different meaning then in the Saxons countries.

Back to United Kingdom

The English Collins Dictionary:

Quern A stone hand mill for grinding corn (Old English cweorn; **related to Old Frisian quern**, Old High German kurn, Old Norse kverna, Gothic quairnus millstone)

Origin: before 950; Middle English; Old English cweorn; akin to Old Norse kvern; hand-mill

Encyclopæida Britannica:

Quern: ancient device for grinding grain. The saddle quern, consisting simply of a flat stone bed and a rounded stone to be operated manually against it, dates from Neolithic times (before 5600 BC). The true quern, a heavy device worked by slave or animal power, appeared by Roman times. Cato the Elder describes a 2nd-century-BC rotary quern consisting of a concave lower stone and a convex upper, turned by a pair of asses. Many such large querns were found in the ruins of Pompeii. The upper stone was set on a spindle that fitted into the lower. The ground grain passed down through holes in the lower stone.

Quern-stone

1. another name for millstone
2. one of the two small circular stones used in a quern



The upper stone of a Scottish hand quern from Dalgarn Mill, North Ayrshire

Quern-stones are stone tools for hand-grinding a wide variety of materials. They were used in pairs. The lower, stationary, stone is called a quern, while the upper mobile stone is called

a hand stone. They were first used in the Neolithic to grind cereals into flour. First Known Use: before 12th century.

From Middle English quern, cwerne, from Old English cweorn (“quern, hand-mill, mill”), from Proto-Germanic *kwernuz, *kwernō (“millstone”), from Proto-Indo-European *g^werəun-, *g^wrāun- (“millstone”). Cognate with North Frisian quern (“quern”), Dutch kweern (“quern”), Middle High German kurn (“millstone”), Danish kværn (“grinder”), Swedish kvarn (“mill, grinder”) (http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/quern#Middle_English)

Back to a Dutch search: kweern

So in Dutch kweern is a hand driven millstone! Now we know that on the word quern in Dutch no information was found.

In our region around 2000 BC. They were growing barley, and later wheat, oats and rye. Corn digests easier if you remove the cover "bran" and the pellet breaks with a mortar or a rubbing stone. This is especially a female task. Hand mixers or kweernen make the job easier and less tiring. By means of a vertical handle a stone can be rotated around an axis, on top of another.

The Romans made quern stones by shaping them and smoothing them with metal hand tools. They used igneous rocks - rocks is formed through the cooling and solidification of magma or lava. Basalt was the favourite one. When igneous rock was not available, sandstone, quartzite or limestone was used.

So, it's interesting to come to the conclusion:

The name Querner comes from quern and is a well-known word in the Nordic countries, the UK and Germany



this lady is a Querner!

Below some ancient quern's:



Below some 'modern' quern's:



A Roman quern:



Fig. 2. — Le moulin à blé chez les Romains.