

The History and Development of English Surnames

by David Flint

Part 2 -- Local Place Names

History

- Jutes, Angles and Saxons invaded Britain in 5th and 6th centuries.
- Norman Conquest 1066 by William, Duke of Normandy.
- Development of hereditary surnames in England complete by about 1450.
- Middle Ages (500-1500)
- Middle English (1100-1500)

Categories of Surnames

- **local place-names**
- relationships
- occupation or office
- nicknames

Byname: a second name used to distinguish individuals, as in people with the same given name

Spelling and Pronunciation

Smthye – Smith; ‘x sylver spones’
Chalmondley, Mainwaring, Marjoribanks

Names from Local Place Names

**In ‘ford’, in ‘ham’, in ‘ley’, in ‘ton’,
The most of English surnames run.**

Local surnames derived from a place name where a man held land or where he came from.

Often used the preposition *de*, *at*, *by*, *in*, etc.

Names from common words and prominent landscape features: Brook, Lane, Hill, Ford, Wood, Grove, Green, Lea, Lee, Leigh (-ley), Meads, Meadows, Fields, Wells, Lane, Wood, Grove > Graves, Lane-Way-Row, Townsend

Prepositions: ‘at the’ > ‘*atte*’, ‘*atten*’

- oak (ME) *atten oke* > *atte noke* > Nokes
- ash (ME) *atten ashe* > *atte nash* > Nash
- *atte welle* > Wells, Attwell, Atwill;
- (Fr.) *Dubois* > Woods; (Fr.) *Dupont* > Bridges

Names of direction: east, west, north, south > examples: Easton, Weston, Norton, Sutton

Sign-Names: “The Bull’s Head”, “The Bull” > ‘*atte bull*’ > Bull

Names from old words no longer in common use, or with different meaning today:

booth	grove	ness or naze
clough	hay	plat
comb or combe	heath	rood or rudd
cop or cope	holm	royd
croft	howe	shaw or schaw
den or dene	knoll	slade
down	knop or knap	thorpe
fell	launde	thwaite
frith	lawe	town/borough
grange	link	worth
		yate

bury – borough – brough – burgh: a castle or fortified house; a manor-house or large farm, from OE words for 'an enclosed or fortified place'. Examples: Edinburgh, Bamburgh, Peterborough, Scarborough, Shrewsbury; Canterbury. Surnames: Attenborough, Lansbury, Marlborough, Queensbury, Salisbury.

Oxford English Dictionary: <https://www.oed.com>

Words related to woodlands:

- shaw, schaw: Bagshaw, Hindshaw, Ramshaw, Hogshaw, Henshaw
- den, dene: Dean, Harden, Hogden, Horsden, Swinden
- -ley (from lee or lea): Horsley, Oxley, Hartley, Rowley Buckley, Hindley, Shipley

Words related to hills:

- knoll: Knowles, Knowlman
- clough: Clough, Clive, Cleves, Clifford, Clifton
- knop or knap: Knapp, Knapman, Knope, Knapton

thorp, thorpe: Althorp

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • <u>Acroyd</u> , Ackroyd, Acton | • Croft, Bancroft |
| • Graves, Greaves, Groves | • <u>Bygate</u> , Woodgate, Ludgate |
| • Brathwaite | • Hatch, Hatcher, Hatchman |
| • Lands, Landers | • Hayes, Hawes, Haywood |
| • Holmes, Holman | • Hawley, Haworth, <u>Hawton</u> |
| • Clough, Clive, Clifford, Clifton | • Ainsworth, Whitworth, Unsworth |
| • Knapp, Knapman, Knapton | • Winthrop |

Foundlings were given a name for location where they were found. The given name was often a saint's name.

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https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Category:England_Surnames

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/British_Surnames_-_International_Institute

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