

## What's in your Name

1100 A.D. - Most people had only one name

As small towns and villages became more populated it became extremely awkward to have three John's, Four Roberts and six Williams all in one village.

So the custom of using surnames developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Britain.

Therefore the use of surnames is less than 1000 years old.

As the number of people grew we had to distinguish one from another

This lent to John who had long legs became known as " John the Long Fellow" and eventually John Longfellow

John the carpenter became John Carpenter.

William who lived by the small stream that was shallow and could be crossed by people and cattle became William Ford, and William who was Roberts son became William Robertson

Also John Wainwright, William Redhead, Walter Tanner etc.

In Scotland or Welsh communities where the range of surnames was limited we ended up with Jones the Coal or Evans the Bread

Scotland and Ireland very quickly followed England in adopting surnames but Wales did not fully adopt this system until in some cases until the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries

We also have names which have meanings John son of John, so surnames developed into John Johnson

Other surnames were places Coombe, which was for a small valley, or Mudford a dweller by the muddy ford.

We also have nicknames which have ended up being a surname such as Trueman who was trusty and faithful and of course Bragg who was proud, arrogant, brisk or brave.

Sometimes surnames recorded the occupation eg Dexter was a dyer, Cooper was a barrelmaker and then of course there is Tanner, Carpenter, Herd, Baker and Fisher.

In my own case John re Jeffery that could be John son of Jeffery which now is John Jeffery.

Or was it Jeff re Jeff ie Jeff son of Jeff which became Jeffree ?

Middle christian names were greatly influenced by people or happenings around at the time.

My middle name is Christopher which was influenced by my spinster aunt Christine.

Our oldest son whose middle name is Christian is influenced by Christopher or so you may think.

No it was after a large HGV ie Christian Salveson

Until recent times the first son born was usually named after the paternal grandfather, the second son was usually named after the maternal grandfather and subsequently the third son was often named after the father.

The first daughter was named after the maternal grandmother, the second daughter after the paternal grandmother, the third daughter was called after the mother.

And so to your family ?

In the past I have come across various sites that have been helpful in my quest for my family search. Copies of these are available.

1. [www.familyrelatives.com](http://www.familyrelatives.com)
2. [freebmd.rootsweb.com](http://freebmd.rootsweb.com)
3. [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
4. [www.familyheritage](http://www.familyheritage)
5. [www.legacy](http://www.legacy)
6. [www.gro.gov.uk](http://www.gro.gov.uk)
7. [www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)
8. [www.groireland.ie](http://www.groireland.ie)
9. [www.groni.gov.uk](http://www.groni.gov.uk)
10. [www.freecen.org.uk](http://www.freecen.org.uk)
11. [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)
12. [www.britishorigins.com](http://www.britishorigins.com)
13. [www.thegenealogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk)
14. [www.genesreunited.co.uk](http://www.genesreunited.co.uk)
15. [www.freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~cdi1927](http://www.freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~cdi1927)
16. [www.beta.org.uk](http://www.beta.org.uk)
17. [www.pilot.org.uk](http://www.pilot.org.uk)
18. [www.cornwall-opc.org](http://www.cornwall-opc.org)
19. [www.freereg-bmd.co.uk](http://www.freereg-bmd.co.uk)
20. [www.ancestorsonboard.com](http://www.ancestorsonboard.com)
21. [www.ellisland.com](http://www.ellisland.com)
22. [www.a2a.org.uk](http://www.a2a.org.uk)
23. [www.british-history.ac.uk/search.asp](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/search.asp)
24. [www.bigenealogy.com](http://www.bigenealogy.com)
25. [www.bulb.ac.uk/link/linkbrowse.cfm?menuId=11374](http://www.bulb.ac.uk/link/linkbrowse.cfm?menuId=11374)
26. [www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com)
27. [www.dmoz.org/society/genealogy/](http://www.dmoz.org/society/genealogy/)
28. [www.familyhistoryonline.net/](http://www.familyhistoryonline.net/)
29. [www.familytreearcher.com](http://www.familytreearcher.com)
30. [www.freeukgen.rootsweb.com](http://www.freeukgen.rootsweb.com)
31. [www.thegenealogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk)
32. [www.genesreunited.co.uk](http://www.genesreunited.co.uk)
33. [www.gengateway.com](http://www.gengateway.com)
34. [www.genuki.org.uk](http://www.genuki.org.uk)
35. [www.britishtislesgenweb.org](http://www.britishtislesgenweb.org)
36. [www.silversurfers.net/findit-people.html](http://www.silversurfers.net/findit-people.html)
37. [www.surnamenavigator.org](http://www.surnamenavigator.org)
38. [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)
39. [www.ancestorspy.com/England/england.htm](http://www.ancestorspy.com/England/england.htm)
40. [www.curiousfox.com/history Wales/anglesey.lasso](http://www.curiousfox.com/history Wales/anglesey.lasso)