

**ENGLISH SURNAMES: AN ESSAY ON
FAMILY NOMENCLATURE, HISTORICAL,
ETYMOLOGICAL, AND
HUMOROUS; WITH SEVERAL
ILLUSTRATIVE APPENDICES, IN TWO
VOLUMES. - VOL. II, PP. 2-243**

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English Surnames: An Essay on Family Nomenclature, Historical, Etymological, and Humorous; With Several Illustrative Appendices, in Two Volumes. - Vol. II, pp. 2-243 by Mark Antony Lower

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MDCCKLIX.

Croce (Holy-cross) were so denominated from one of their ancestors having brought the wood of the true cross into Italy. In many instances the name has survived all remembrance of the circumstance in which it originated. *Beaufoy*, for example, was perhaps given primarily to a vassal who had shown some particular instance of fidelity to his feudal superior; while *Malfeyth* may have been attached to one who had been guilty of an act of treachery. *Makepeace*, again, was probably assigned to a person who had officiated as a mediator between two hostile parties. In many cases, however, the memory of the event has been transmitted to our own times by tradition or actual record, and guaranteed by the heraldic ensigns of the family. In general the event redounds to the prowess and valour of the original bearer, either at the Norman Conquest, in the Crusades, or some other military expedition; though occasionally it rather reflects disgrace. Many of the names which have been given to foundlings belong to this chapter. A few have relation to feudal tenures.

Among the surnames said to have originated at the battle of Hastings, and shortly afterwards, are those of *Fortescue*, *Eyre*, and *Osborne*.

The name of **FORTESCUE** is said to have been bestowed on Sir Richard le Forte ("the strong"), one of the leaders in the Conqueror's army, who had the good fortune to protect his chief at the battle of Hastings, by bearing before him a massive *escu* or shield. The noble family descended from this personage use, in allusion to this circumstance and to their name, the punning motto,—**Forte-Scutum salus Ducum**—"A strong shield is the safety of commanders."

The following traditionary anecdote belongs to the same date, and accounts for the name of EYRE :

"The first of this family was named *Truelove*, but at the battle of Hastings, Oct. 14, 1066, William was flung from his horse, and his helmet beaten into his face, which Truelove observing, pulled off, and horsed him again. The duke told him, 'Thou shalt hereafter from Truelove be called *Eyre* (or Air), because thou hast given me the air I breathe.' After the battle, the duke, on inquiry respecting him, found him severely wounded (his leg and thigh having been struck off), ordered him the utmost care, and, on his recovery, gave him lands in Derby in reward for his services, and the leg and thigh in armour, cut off, *for his crest*, an honorary badge yet worn by all the Eyres in England."*

There is more of romance than truth in this story, for it must strike the reader as very remarkable, that the personage of whom it is related—a Norman born and bred—should bear a cognomen so very English as True-love. The singular crest borne by his descendants must have originated from some more recent occurrence, as armorial bearings were not used for many years after the battle of Hastings. Still there may be *some* foundation for the tradition. The following has more appearance of credibility; while it is unfortunate that the name to which it refers was borne as a Christian name much earlier than the date of the occurrence.

"Walter, a Norman knight, and a great favourite of the king (William the First), playing at chess with that king on a summer evening, on the banks of the

* Thorpe's Catalogue of the Deeds of Battel Abbey, p. 106, note.

Ouse, won all he played for. The king threw down the board, saying he had nothing more to play for. 'Sir,' said Sir Walter, 'here is land.' 'There is so,' said the king, 'and if thou beatest me this game also, thine be all the land on this side the bourne or river, which thou canst see as thou sittest.' He *had* the good fortune to win; and the king, clapping him on the shoulder, said, 'Henceforth thou shalt be called *Ousebourne*.' Hence it is supposed came the name of *Osborne*."*

As I give my authorities for these anecdotes, the burden of proof does not rest with me. And even if the reader should deem some of them destitute of any foundation in truth, he will perhaps agree with me that they are worthy of preservation as curious legends.

Among the Anglo-Saxon families who resisted the dominion of William, that of *Bulstrode* is said to have been conspicuous.

The head of that family was despoiled of his estate by the victorious Norman, who presented it to one of his own followers, and furnished him with a body of men to seize it by force. The Saxon called in the aid of some of his neighbours to defend his ancestral acres, and intrenched himself with an earthwork, which still exists to attest the truth of the story. It happened that the besieged possessed no horses, so that they were fain to bestride certain bulls which they had brought together within the inclosure; and thus mounted they made a sally, and completely routed their assailants. The king hearing of this gallant exploit, desired to see the heroes who had achieved it. The Saxon and his

* Life of Corinna. Pegge's Curialia Miscellanea, p. 319.

seven sons, therefore, once more *bestrode* their *bulls* and proceeded to court, when William was so much delighted with the interview, that he permitted them to remain in undisturbed possession of the estate. Hence they acquired the name of *Bull-strode*! "Cock and Bull!" will probably escape the lips of the reader at the perusal of this story, since *Bulstrode* is a local surname borrowed from the parish in Buckinghamshire where this marvellous victory is alleged to have taken place.

The following is said to be the origin of the surname of *TYNTE*: In the year 1192, at the battle of *Ascalon*, a young knight of the noble house of *Arundel*, clad all in white, with his horse's howsings of the same colour, so gallantly distinguished himself on that memorable field, that *Richard Cœur de Lion* remarked publicly, after the victory, "that the maiden knight had borne himself as a lion, and done deeds equal to those of six *croisés* [crusaders], whereupon he conferred on him for arms, "*a lion gules on a field argent, between six crosslets of the first,*" and for motto, *Tynctus cruore Saraceno*; "Stained, or dyed, with Saracen blood." His descendants thence assumed the surname of *Tynte*, and settled in *Somersetshire*.*

The name of *Lockhart* was originally given to a follower of *Sir James, Lord Douglas*, who accompanied him to the Holy Land with the heart of *King Robert Bruce*. In consequence of this event, some branches of the family bear a padlock enclosing a heart in their arms.

The thrice illustrious surname of *PLANTAGENET*,

* *Burke's Commoners*, vol. iv.

borne by eight successive kings of England,* originated with Foulques or Fulke, Count of Anjou, who flourished in the twelfth century. This personage, to expiate some enormous crimes of which he had been guilty, went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and wore in his cap as a mark of his humility, a *planta genista* or broom-plant (which was sometimes used by his descendants as a crest), and on that account was surnamed Plantagenet. The ancient English family of *Broome* are said to be lineal descendants of this nobleman.

The surname of STRONGIMANUS, or *Strong-hand*, applied to William de Albini, Earl of Arundel, which did not, like the preceding, become hereditary, originated, according to Dugdale, in the following manner:

“It happened that the Queen of France being then a widow, and a very beautiful woman, became much in love with a knight of that country, who was a comely person, and in the flower of his youth; and because she thought that no man excelled him in valour, she caused a tournament to be proclaimed throughout her dominions, promising to reward those who should exercise themselves therein according to their respective demerits; and concluding, that if the person whom she so well affected, should act his part better than others in those military exercises, she might marry him without any dishonour to herself. Hereupon divers gallant men from forrain parts hasting to Paris, amongst others

* Some authorities deny this, and allege that these sovereigns never used it. True; but this does not prove that Plantagenet was not their real family name. Her Majesty Queen Victoria has no occasion whatever for a surname (the design of which is to distinguish one family from another), and therefore it might with equal force be argued that her family name is not *Guelph*. Non-use does not imply non-possession.