

**AN ACCOUNT OF THE
DESCENDANTS OF THOMAS
ORTON, OF WINDSOR,
CONNECTICUT, 1641**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649051755

An Account of the Descendants of Thomas Orton, of Windsor, Connecticut, 1641 by Edward Orton

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EDWARD ORTON

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CONNECTICUT, 1641**

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AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
Descendants of Thomas Orton

OF
WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT, 1641
(PRINCIPALLY IN THE MALE LINE)

BY
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COLUMBUS, OHIO
PRESS OF NITZCHKE BROTHERS
1896

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The Orton Family in America

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

The surname ORTON is neither a common nor an unusual one. It is a name that could be heard without surprise in any community of English descent. It occurs in the directories of many cities of the country and can probably be found in most of the Northern towns of the United States that have a population of 100,000 or more; but the list of Ortons is generally confined to a few individuals, and in many instances there is but a single family.

It is found at the present time in at least twenty-six States of the Union, and probably in twenty-seven or twenty-eight. It also occurs in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec in Canada. Postoffices are named for the family in at least six States of North America.

The name seems to hold about the same character as to distribution in England that it has in the United States, as will presently be shown. One is not surprised to meet it anywhere, but it is scarcely common in any city or district,

so far as I have learned. It can be found in the directories of many of the large English towns, as London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Coventry, etc.

A German work on the derivation of English surnames makes it of Danish origin, and gives its meaning as "a round, steep hill." Orton is certainly found as a surname in Norway at the present time, and has recently been brought to the United States as a fresh importation from that country by at least one family. Ortonville, Minn., was named for C. K. Orton, who was born in Bergen, Norway.

The English name can easily be accounted for as a contraction of the name "Overton," and in one family list I find it spelled "Overton." It is also pronounced "Ore-ton" by some English families. If the name had been contracted from Overton, its signification and history would be obvious, viz., that of a family residing on a hill, overlooking a town. It would be analogous to many other English surnames, as, Easton, Weston, Norton (Northtown), Hilton, Seaton, Colton, Milton, Clifton, Fenton, Vinton, Townsend, Underwood, Greenwood, Blackwood, Churchill, Whitehill, Whitehurst, Broadbeck, Clifford, Horsford, Blackford, Woodbridge, etc. The name has certainly been established in England for a number of centuries. It is found in several minor geographical designations that have presumably come down from early time. If, as asserted by the German author already quoted, it is of Danish origin, it probably goes back to the Teutonic invasions of the fifth or the ninth century. The etymology suggested above is, however, so plausible that I am inclined to accept it. In other words, I am disposed to consider the name a contraction from Overton.

Of the Ortons in the United States at the present time, a very large proportion, probably not less than nineteen-

twentieths, are the descendants of Thomas Orton, who is recorded as a resident of Windsor, Conn., in 1641. It is a provisional and imperfect account of his descendants that I herewith undertake. For fifteen or twenty years I have been accumulating facts pertaining to this subject, but my work has been confined to the spare hours of a laborious profession and a busy life, and has been carried on principally by correspondence, which is far inferior to personal interview, both as to the range and accuracy of the statements secured. I have, however, brought together a large number of facts, which, in view of the uncertainty of life, I have decided to publish, so as to put them beyond the danger of loss. Inadequate as the record will be, it will at least form a basis for further work in this direction by those who will inherit the name in the years to come.

My work has been greatly aided during the last few years by the zealous co-operation of Dr. John Jackson Orton, of Lakeville, Conn. He has added much to the lists that I had previously made out, and may well deserve to be counted joint compiler with me of many of the tables and lists that follow. I am also under obligations to many members of the family for such facts as they had in their possession. In this connection, I must especially name Judge Hobert S. Orton, of Princeton, Mo.; Judge Philo A. Orton, of Darlington, Wis.; Charles L. Orton, A. B., of North Walden, Vt.; Miss Mary Orton Martin, of Woodbury, Conn.; Mrs. Frances A. Miller, of Spring City, Tenn.; and Miss Esther M. Orton, of Geneva, Ill. I am glad to acknowledge my special indebtedness to Cothren's History of Ancient Woodbury. The three pages of his work devoted to the Orton family have proved invaluable to me.

I take pleasure in naming, also, Hon. Philo A. Orton, of Wisconsin; James Douglas Orton, of New Jersey, and Dr.