

How Did Your Surname Originate?

Our surnames are passed down to us from our ancestors. Maybe the origin was an Occupational Name. It may have described what an early ancestor did for their living: ie. Baker, Carter, Cook, Hunter, Miller or Potter.

Or it could have described a person's characteristic: Short, Long. A colouring: Black, White, Green; or another characteristic; Strong, Swift.

It may have been a place name; Bedford, Hamilton, Sutton. Or you may have descended from a landowner or taken the name of their manor or castle; Windsor, is a famous example.

Some names are from a geographical feature of the landscape; Brook, Forest, Stone, Grove. Then there were clan names; Campbell, Douglas, Forbes.

Surnames from the male side of your family; Benson 'son of Ben', Richardson, Simpson. Surnames from the female side of your family; Molson from Moll, Marriott from Mary. Emmott, from Emma.

I've always thought my maiden surname, Littlejohn, given to my forebears, who were associated with the outlaw, Robin Hood, was a nickname for someone of large stature! I was so pleased to take my husband's surname in 1963.

So, what was the origin of your surname?
R H

'By hook or by crook, I'll be first in this book'

Recently, Norm Lind held a children's workshop at the museum, to introduce them to the art of making an autograph book.

When I was at school it became the craze to be given an autograph book for your 9th or 10th birthday. Albums came in a variety of sizes and mine measured 6 by 4 inches and had pages in multiple pastel colours.

An autograph book was usually a small book for collecting autographs from others; traditionally they were exchanged among friends and family, to fill with poems, personal messages and other mementos. Modern variations include Year Books, Friendship and Guest books.

The first true autograph books dated back to the 1500s when they were used for collecting signatures of fellow graduates and kept as a memento of college life. A typical page often contained verse and a formal greeting; more artistic people sketched full page drawings. They may also have contained embroidery, a lock of hair or pressed flowers.

Expressions of friendship were a major subject:

'Make new friends, but keep the old, New ones are silver, but the old ones are gold'.

Some words offered advice:

'The wise old owl lived in an oak, the more he heard the less he spoke

The less he spoke, the more he heard, why can't we be like that old bird?'

Pages were ruled up in small squares, so several people could contribute. Some simply wrote their signature and date.

Sometimes the poems were bawdy, or maybe religious, or written in limerick style:

'There was a young man from Perth, who was born on the day of his birth

He was married they say, on his wife's wedding day

And died his last day on earth.'

By the 1950s autograph albums saw a change, and that was to collect signatures of 'celebrities', famous singers and other 'stars' of the time.

'Some write for fortune, some write for fame, but I write simply to sign my name!'
R H

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A collection of interesting items for friends and supporters of 'The Coach House'

Old Traditions

As the cooler days draw in, I guess some of you may be having porridge as a filling, nutritious, warm start to the day. But what is your favourite specialty: Rolled oats, Milk Oaties, Steel cut oats, Scottish Oats, Creamed Rice or Wheat Semolina?

One family tradition shared with me recently was that in 'Granddad's home', a huge pot of porridge was cooked each morning, and if any was left over, it was spread in a drawer, about an inch thick, to cool and dry over-night. Next morning it was rolled up like a sponge roll, wrapped in grease-proof paper and Granddad would take it to work for his lunch.



'Suppin Parritch' - Edinburgh 1831

His morning porridge though, eaten hot, was sprinkled with salt and enjoyed. After each spoonful of porridge, he took a

sip of milk from a glass; milk was never poured over his porridge.

Left over porridge was also kept and set in the drawer, then next day cut into squares, perhaps like a custard square.

Porridge was a favourite Scottish breakfast, with oatmeal being the staple of their diet. Oates were well suited to the country's colder climate. Thick, rich and hearty porridge was packed full of fibre, vitamins and minerals, and it can sustain you right through to lunchtime.

Porridge in the drawer was certainly a staple in some east of Scotland agricultural communities. A man remembers getting a 'slab o' parritch fae the drawer' as a youngster, spread with homemade jam, it was ambrosia. The drawer was scrubbed after it was emptied and lined with baking or greaseproof paper, before being refilled.

But now people who enjoy porridge may also add milk, cream, sliced fruit, berries, brown sugar, maple syrup or honey and chopped nuts. A far cry from our Scottish ancestors, oats, water and salt.

In my younger days, on Sunday, we often had creamy oatmeal sprinkled with brown sugar and cream poured over. Yum!

But if you make porridge do you use a spurtle or a wooden spoon? Traditions do change.

With thanks to Winston Pearce for relating his Granddad's story. R H

Walter George Pearce's story continued:

The first work for the new settlers after they had got a whare or a home built was to fence in a paddock or two, so as to keep a horse and a cow handy. The three-sod, ditch and bank with manuka scrub weaved on stakes or two wires run along the top and planted on both sides between the second and third row of sods with gorse, proved to be the universal fence in open country and cost about 6 shillings a chain, not including the scrub or wire. Many miles of this kind of fence was run up in the first few years.

My chief work was looking after the cattle as there were no fences. The run cattle came around and led ours away, so I used to look them up every day.

Before the settlers took up the land it was leased by the Government to runholders who had a large number of cattle all over the open country. Captain Daniels had Ngaio, Mr Swainson, Rakehau, Mr Lee, Potatou, Mr Hammond, Waitohi. The Hammonds of Bulls also had cattle running there. As the land had been sold to the settlers the runholders had to remove their cattle.

These runholders made a grand muster of all the funs at Ngaio, Captain Daniels homestead, which had been bought by Sir James Wilson and is now held by one of Sir James's sons. This muster took a good many days. The plan adopted was for half a dozen stockman to ride quietly out to the extreme limit of the run in the morning so as not to disturb the cattle and save the horses for the more strenuous work on the drive home in the afternoon. The stockmen turned around and spread out, so as to clear all the space of the country before them. This went on from day to day until the whole country was cleared of cattle - 1200 head. They were put in a large holding paddock pending drafting. A good many of the settlers' cattle had

been mustered in with them, and Mr Tom Worsley who had had considerable experience in the cattle business in the Wairarapa, and was something of an expert, lent a hand in the drafting and took charge of the settler's cattle. This drafting was no job for a new chum, as the cows were very wild, and the old bulls could not be played with. During the ear marking and branding process they frequently provided entertainment that could not be beaten at a Wild West show. The riding and the handling of the stock whip by some of these old-time stockmen was superb. Neither were there any flies on their horses, especially those of Mr Mills and a young fellow named Knox from Turakina. The lowing of the cows and calves at night was a sound not soon to be forgotten - it was deafening.

I went with Mr Worsley to help bring away the settlers' contingent of cattle. These were fairly quiet. Mr W Mills, a long time, well known settler in Cheltenham was overseer for Captain Daniels, came along for part of the way to give us a start. Mr Mills sent me out on the left wing to turn in the cattle and galloping down a hill I came a cropper. On riding back to him he greeted me with a smile and said, "A few more like that and you will soon be able to ride!"

During our first year we paid a visit to the Feilding district and called on Mr and Mrs J Whisker who were from the Lower Hutt and had settled in Feilding near where the Borough Abattoirs now stand. Mr J Hughey, Mrs Whisker's brother, then owned what is now the Feilding Racecourse. We came down to Mrs Whiskers and the cupboard was bare, as sometimes happens in the outback. However, she was equal to the occasion and set to work to bake scones. While this work was in progress, she told us something about Feilding and the emigrants that were coming from Home. Pointing out of the door she said, "That's where Feilding is

going to be, over there." However, I was more interested in the scones that were in the camp oven just then, than where 'Feilding was going to be'. When the scones came on the table. I thought they were the best scones I had ever seen or tasted. Whether it was that I had had a long ride, and a long wait while they passed through the evolution from the flour bag to the table, or whether my 15-year old palate was not sufficiently matured to judge, I cannot say. I have accounted for a good many scones since. When my mother used to make a specially good batch, she would always ask me if they were as good as Mrs Whiskers. I think even yet I have not met anything that was so delicate and so fine as those we had that day, 48 years ago. At any rate the thought of that day is a pleasant memory still.

In those first days before there were any fences, settlers used to tether their horses by a long rope to a low bush or cabbage tree to prevent them wandering away, but they used to get away all the same. A diligent search, extending for days would often prove fruitless. A reward would be offered, then along would come a Maori with the lost horse to claim the reward. After a while the settlers dropped to this little game, as it was reported that our dusky neighbours had a 'plant' and kept dark until the reward was announced.

It was also discovered that swaggers travelling across the run would annex, take without asking - one of these horses, make a halter and ride to where they wanted to go and then let the horse loose and it would fall into the hands of the Maoris. We lost one of our horses and that led to the now famous Kopani/Kopane. In 1873, which was reputed to be the 'link'. I was unsuccessful be-

cause the clearing was covered with thistles about 6 foot high. The horse was eventually found near Feilding. A settler was doing a bit of ploughing with him.

The Maoris at Awahuri thought it good business to pound any cattle found straying over that way. I was told they had one of our bullocks in a large paddock on the Sandon side of Awahuri. I went over and saw the bullock in the paddock, went down to secure his release but the Maori was not at home. I would have to come again. Going home I saw the bullock again and noticed a gate on the far side of the paddock. I examined the gate and found it was not locked, so I pinched the bullock and poundage is still owing.

To be continued



Was this how Mrs Whisker would have remembered the bush at this time.