ORIGIN OF MANY FAMILY NAMES.

One Name Once Sufficed—Introduction of Surnames and Their Heredity.

[From the Boston Herald.]

Do you know the origin of your family name? If not the following may tend to show that it will interest you to follow up. In the first ages of the world a single name was sufficient for each individual, and that name was generally invented for the person, in allusion to the circumstances attending his birth, or to some personal quality he possessed, or which his parents fondly hoped he might in future possess. This rule seems to have uniformly prevailed in all the nations of antiquity concerning which we have any records, in the earliest periods of their history. In Egypt we find persons of position using only one name, as Pharaoh, Potiphar; in Canaan, Abraham, Isaac; in Greece, Diomedes, Ulysses; in Rome, Romulus, Remus; in Britain, Brut, Caradoc, etc.

Surnames were the simple result of increase, when population, hitherto isolated and small, became so increased as to necessitate further portraiture than the merely personal one could satisfy. The city or family name, or some other, served them materially to overcome the difficulty, and in the first books of Moses we find the Hebrews with only this personality as a means of identifying the individual. Then, each repository of "Holiness to the Lord" was "Caleb, the son of Jephunneh," or "Jair, the son of Manasseh," or, perhaps, the place of his birth or honor or occupation was caused to a further surname. Certain of these single names became popular after eight, ten, twelve, or more "Judas" were such. A further distinction, therefore, was necessary. This gave rise to surnames, as a mere descriptive character. We find the personal one still in use, as in "Simon Bar-Jonah," "Simon, the son of Jonah," or "Judas," for in addition to this we have, was the local surname introduced, as in "Judas Iscariot," "Judas, the man of Iscariot," and "Judas, the Galilean."

In the meantime, the Scottish but third branch of the Celtic family had been adopting similar means, though the latter was decidedly the first in the 5-5 of the Celtic family, such double names as "Dicaspius the Thief," "Dicaspius the Chief," "Sceolan, the son of Dubhgall," "Sceolan, chief of Moidart," show the same custom and the same cause.

The Celtic race had a very complete system of prenomenclature, and each one was and is three-fold name. The first, or personal, was the same as ours, or our personal or baptismal name. The second is what we may term the clan name, and the third, the patronymic, corresponding with our family surnames. Thus, we have John Irvine appellation to Marcus Tullius Cicero, or Arthur Lynchbar Jones. If a Celtic called slave had an immediate superior, whom him, his single name became his clan name, and the third was provided in one generally being the name of him who was the emancipator. Thus we have Lochlan Jones and Lochlan Jones. The above are only a few of the patronymic surnames, but a host of other surnames have a similar origin.

The Saxon added "son" as a Christian name, as Jones, Clark, "Wilkinson's son," or "Dickerson," that is, "Dickin's son," or merely the apostrophe, as "Richard's" or "Richards'." This gives a view at once to the extraordinary number of patronymics our directory supplies of those short and curtailed forms. Thus "Daw" from "Dawson" gives us Dawson or Dawes, "Hick," Jackson, Jenkins, Hickson, Hicks; "Watt," from Walter, Watson or Watts.

The Norman addition was made to his category by the introduction of a further element. This arose from the nobility having a single name only. In early days the three chief dignitaries to use were those of "king," "duke" and the "baronial." Hence we find these latter being of Norman origin. "Rik," the old Saxon "ric," child or offspring, and "ricsmen" meant specialists, or, as we say, the immediate practice was concerned, by the Plantagenets, it still preserved in the form of "Richmond," which, in the Saxon, lambkin or dotkin. The nursery literature secured to its cockrobins, cockbiots and cockbreses the immortality of the event, and, in the Norman, we get Simpkins and Simons, from Geoffrey, Jeffries and Jeffcocks from William, Wilkins, Wilcox and Willet or Willett, from Mary, Marriott, from Elias Elliot, from Emma or Emmet, Emmets or Emmett, from Hatch, Hatchins, etc. Or, as a Celtic, the latter form at present generally found in France. It is the antetype that is incorporated in the ancient Mnemonics, or Mnemonics, which, with only a few exceptions, are Celtic.

Now, in this and 11th centuries, however, a change in the system is about and unprecedented manner was over the 11th century. The more popular and sectional Saxon surnamic nomenclature began to assume a solid, lasting form. It was the result, in fact, of an inevitable necessity, namely, Population was on the increase, commerce was spreading, and society was fast becoming complex. With all the other difficulties of individuality added. It was impossible, without some tangible distinction, to maintain a secure identity. Hence, what had been so exceptional and irregular centuries, became a fixed and general practice. The distinguishing adjunct, by a slow process, became part and parcel of a man's property, and passed on with his other possessions to his offspring. This substance had come to be of various kinds. It might be the designation of the property owned, as in the case of the Norman baronial, or their hereditary settlements, or it might be some local peculiarity that marked the abode, as in Saxon. It might be the "trade" of the craft the owner followed. It might be the title of the rank or office he held, or it might be a mere nickname acquired from the personal or Christian name of his father or mother. It might be some characteristic, mental or physical, complimentary or his reverse. Any of these it might be, it mattered not which; but when once it became attached to the possessor and gave him a fixed identity, it clung to him for life, and eventually passed on to his offspring. Then it was that at length local and personal names came into vogue, upon the same level, and as the Christian nomenclature before, had attempted the life of our various Celtic and Saxonic and Teutonic antecedents, so now these latter took on the character of the era in which they arrived, and now we have them, with all its antiquity of their birth upon them, breathing of times and customs and fashions, and things that are now which, if issued from our eyes, or are as completely changed as to be as far and fairly recognizable to that which they have been.

The period in which surnames assumed as hereditary character as a familiar custom was during the twelfth century.

"Ap" is the Welsh equivalent of the English "son," and when it has come before a name substance with a vowel, this is made intuitive by the insertion of the letter "h." Thus, "Ap-Hoel" was given as "Powel," "Ap-Howel" was given as "Powel," "Ap-Rhys" as "Ap-Owen," "Rowlin," "Ap-Evan," "Bevan," "Ap-Richard," "Prichard," "Ap-Humphrey," "Pomphrey," or "Ap-Howell," "Powell."

The Norman surnamic nomenclature was formed similarly as the Welsh, by a prefix of "fitz," the modern French "fils," surnamed. If this class were at first used similarly as the Welsh, by a prefix, as "Fitz-Robinson," "Fitz-Gerald," "Fitz-Patrick," "Fitz-Warren," "Fitz-Hugh," "Fitz-Ferry," "Fitz-Richard," or "Fitz-Neal."

Emery, though not early forgotten as a personal name, lives on as our surname. It was once a Christian name, Americus, Almeric, Almaric, Emeric. Emeric seem to have been the original spelling, and Emery, which reminds us that it is the same name to which, in the Italian form of Americus, we owe the name of the continent. Certain forms that three are found in Alfred, Alister, Almer, Aymar and Amar. The surnamic form of it is very, very a few. It has had its free run of the courts in the Amerys, Emerys and Emeys, and its Italian patronymic form we often meet with in the Emmonds, Emmerson and Emerson.

The name of Robert was early prominent in the public eye, and, as a personal name, it has lasted down to our day. Our Congress represents the surnamic form of the name. The Norman forms that three are found in Alister