

# Surname Origins

## Surname: Cowley



**Cowley Family Crest**

This name is of English locational origin from any of the several places thus called. Cowley in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Devonshire and Staffordshire, recorded respectively as Cufanlea, Couela, Couelegh and Covelav in Anglo - Saxon Records for the various counties, dated 949 to 1066, derive their names from the Old English pre 7th Century 'Cufan Leah' meaning 'the wood or clearing (leah) of Cufa' the byname form 'Cufi' meaning block or stump. Cowley in Gloucestershire, appearing as Kulege in the Domesday Book of 1086 is so called from the Old English 'Cu - leah' meaning 'clearing where cows grazed'. Two in Derbyshire recorded as Collei in the Domesday Book, derive their first element from the Old English 'col' meaning 'charcoal'; hence 'clearing where charcoal was burned'. Finally, Cowley in Middlesex translates as 'leah in a cofa' i.e. recess or creek. William Cowley, aged 20 yrs., who embarked from London on the ship 'America' bound for Virginia, was one of the earliest recorded namebearers to settle in the New World. The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of Osbert de Couela, which was dated 1167, 'The Pipe Rolls of Oxfordshire', during the reign of King Henry 11, The Builder of Churches, 1154 - 1189. Surnames became necessary when governments introduced personal taxation. In England this was known as Poll Tax. Throughout the centuries, surnames in every country have continued to "develop" often leading to astonishing variants of the original spelling.

## Surname: Jones



**Jones Family Crest**

This famous surname, widespread throughout the British Isles, and the most popular surname in Wales, one in ten Welsh people being so-called, is nevertheless of English medieval origins. It derives either from the male given name John, or its female equivalent Joan, both Norman French introductions after the 1066 Invasion. Both names are written as Jon(e) in medieval documents, and a clear distinction between them on the grounds of gender was not made until the 15th Century. However, because western society has almost invariably had a male as family head throughout history, bearers of the surname Jones are more likely to derive it from a patronymic form of John, than a matronymic form of Joan. The personal name John, ultimately from the Hebrew "Yochanan" meaning "Jehovah has favoured (me with a son)", has always enjoyed enormous popularity in Europe, and particularly so after the famous Crusades of the 12th century. The name, which is found in some four hundred spellings, is in honour of St. John the Baptist, the precursor of Christ. The surname as "Jones", first appears on record in England in the latter part of the 13th Century, and also features as one of the most numerous settler names in Ireland, having been introduced in the wake of the Anglo- Norman Invasion of 1170. It is now found in every Irish county, especially in the larger towns, and has also been Gaelicized as "MacSeoin". The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of Matilda Jones, which was dated 1273, in the "Hundred Rolls of Huntingdonshire", during the reign of King Edward 1st, known as "The Hammer of the Scots", reigned 1272 - 1307.

## Surname: Davis



**Davis Family Crest**

This distinguished surname, with no less than twenty Coats of Arms, and several notable entries in the "Dictionary of National Biography", is a patronymic form of the male given name David, itself coming from the Hebrew "Dodaveha" meaning "Beloved of Jehovah". This name was borne by the greatest of the early kings of Israel, which led to its popularity first among the Jews, and later among Christians throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. In Britain, the popularity of the personal name was increased due to the fame of St. David, 6th Century Bishop of Menevia, who became patron saint of Wales, and also as a result of its having been borne by two kings of Scotland: David 1, who reigned from 1124 to 1153, and David 11 (1329 - 1371). One David clericus, recorded in Documents relating to the Danelaw, Lincolnshire, dated 1150, is one of the earliest recorded bearers of the personal name in England. The patronymic first emerges in the early 14th Century (see below), and in 1402, a Richard Davys was entered in the Register of the Freemen of the City of York. Richard Barrett Davis (1782 - 1852) was animal painter to William IV, and Sir John Francis Davis, chief superintendent of British trade in China, was made K.C.B. in 1854. The Coat of Arms most associated with the name is a silver shield with a chevron pean, in base a black lion rampant, a chief indented of the last, and a canton ermines. The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of John Dauisse, which was dated 1327, in the "Subsidy Rolls of Cambridgeshire", during the reign of King Edward III, known as "The Father of the Navy", 1327 - 1377. Surnames became necessary when governments introduced personal taxation. In England this was known as Poll Tax. Throughout the centuries, surnames in every country have continued to "develop" often leading to astonishing variants of the original spelling.