



Field Genealogy Being the Record of All the Field Family in America Whose Ancestors Were in This Country Prior to 1700: V. 1

Frederick Clifton Pierce

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EARLY HISTORY OF THE FIELD FAMILY.

THE name of Field is an ancient and honorable one in England, and can be traced far back of the Conquest. Probably not a dozen families in England can prove so high an antiquity. The family name of Field is one of several, such as Wood, Hill, etc., derived from locality. Persons with corresponding patronymics may be found in every civilized country. The word originally signified land on which the timber had been felled, as distinguished from woodland. It is evident from the nature of its origin that there are many families of that name, related to each other, from having two common ancestors. It was anciently written De la Feld, or De la Felde, as was also the noun from which the name was derived; but about the middle of the fourteenth century the spelling of both was changed to Field, or, in some cases, Feild. We find, for instance, in the early editions of the Bible the well known words printed thus, "consider the lilies of the feld." The fact of the name being hereditary in the family to which this book relates as early as the middle of the tenth century, and probably at a still more remote period, indicates a so-called Norman origin.

Freeman says in his history of the Norman Conquest that there is no well ascertained case of a strictly hereditary surname in England before the Conquest, and that they were a novelty at that time in Normandy, where the custom was taking root. After the Conquest there were instances of hereditary names in England, among the Norman families especially, if not confined to them. With these few exceptions, hereditary surnames did not come into use here till about the middle of the fourteenth century.

Burke states in one edition of his "Landed Gentry," under the head of De la Field, that this family was originally in Alsace, near the Vosges Mountains, where it was seated at the Chateau de la Feld, near Colmar, from the darkest period of the middle ages; that the Counts de la Feld were the once powerful proprietors of the demesnes and castles near Colmar, of which the latter still bears their name. These Lords had large possessions in Alsace and Lorraine, and are frequently mentioned in the wars of those countries. The Croix d'Or of La Feld, their ancient badge, is still the coat armor of the Delafields. Hubertus dela Feld was the first of his race that emigrated to England. He went over with the crowd of foreigners who attended the Conqueror hither, his name appearing enrolled as the owner of lands in the County of Lancaster in 1069, the 3rd of William I.

Burke also states that others of the name were proprietors of land in the same county in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and were descendants of Sir Hurbert-us. We have no authentic record of the companions of the Conqueror, and it is generally admitted by competent genealogists that the "roll of Battle Abbey" is imperfect, and has been tampered with. It does not, therefore, help us in this matter. Burke is not always reliable, and when the writer* wrote to him for his authority for the statements in his book, he replied that he had forgotten where he found them, or from whom he had received them. The writer has not often met with the name in England prior to the middle of the thirteenth century. In the great roll of the Pipe there is mention of a Hugo de la Felde under the head of the

tAnother account says the names of the Knights who came over with William to England are engraved on a tablet in a church at Falaise in France, the birthplace of William. ♦Osgood Field.

Counties of Bucks and Beds, in the list of Richard I. (1189). A little later in the 3rd of John (1201), the following entry occurs in the "Rotuli de Oblatis": "V t- 5 The King to all, etc. Know ye that Hugh de Stueton to whom at first we (wrote for his daughter for Richard de la Felda, and afterwards for Robert de Carduel, has offered us 100 marks of silver that his daughter may freely marry whom she pleases, and also offers to give .

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