

The origin of some English surnames are obvious eg. *Smith*, *Carpenter*. Others are more obscure because they may have changed considerably since they were first used.

Surnames (family names) are not like first (given) names. The surname grew out of the need to distinguish one John from another: **John the cook** or John the barber. Where he lived may have been the way to identify him: **John on the hill** or John by the woods. Perhaps he had moved from abroad: **John French**, John Fleming (from Flanders). He may have had a very distinctive appearance such as **John the wild**, John the long fellow or John with the white head. Or he got his father's given name as a surname: **John Peters**, John Peterson.



A potter at work

Around the 14th century surnames were fixed and no longer referred to the person bearing them. This happened in towns first, in the country later.

- **British family names:** *Armstrong*, *Baker*, *Barber*, *Beckham*, *Bishop*, *Black*, *Bush*, *Carpenter*, *Churchill*, *Cook*, *Cooper*, *Cuttler* (made knives). *Eastwood*, *Edward*, *Edwards*, *Fairchild*, *Fisher*, *Fleming*, *Fletcher* (made arrows), *French*, *Greenwood*, *Harper*, *Harris*, *Hill*, *Holland*, *Hunter*, *Ireland*, *Kitchener*, *Little*, *Longfellow*, *Peters*, *Potter* (made pots), *Richardson*, *Shakespeare*, *Shipman*, *Short*, *Silver*, *Smith*, *Sweet*, *Tailor*, *Townsend*, *Turner* (made wooden bowls), *Upjohn*, *Watson* (Walter's son), *Webster*, *White*, *Whitehead*, *Wild*, *Williams*

**Occupations:** *Baker*, .....

**Home or Place of Birth:** *Eastwood*, .....

**Appearance or Character:** *Short*, .....

**Father's or Mother's name:** *Harris*, .....