

Reviews of Books*

The Babson Genealogy 1606-1997[:] Descendants of Thomas and Isabel Babson[,] who first arrived in Salem, Massachusetts[,] in 1637, by Ann Theopold Chaplin, C.G. (Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 1997. Hardcover, 453 pp. + x, appendixes, index. \$18.00 plus \$5.00 shipping). Order from Babson Historical Association, c/o David Babson, 76 Leonard St., Gloucester, MA 01930.

This is the third version of a major compiled genealogy of the Babson family to appear since 1934. (The first was George Walter Chamberlain's *The Babson Genealogy*; the second, Catherine Finney-MacDougal's *The Babson Genealogy, 1637-1977*, was published in 1978.) The growth of the date range included in the works' titles, and the growing scale of the books, shows not only the burgeoning of a New England family—with an anomalous and romantic Carolina branch—but also the amassing of knowledge about the Babson family as new roots and branches are located and assume their place in the family tree.

The most dramatic addition to this Babson genealogy, one that will be of keen interest to all Babson descendants, is the long-sought identification of Thomas^A Babson, husband of the immigrant widow Isabel¹ () Babson; the record of baptism of eight of their children in Wookey, near Wells, Somerset (where Thomas was buried in 1630); and the record of embarkation of Richard² Babson, "with his mother and brother" (i.e., James² Babson, ancestor of all known American Babsons in this line), on an unnamed ship from Weymouth in April 1637. The embarkation record was first published (but without drawing attention to the Richard Babson entry) by John Insley Coddington in the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* in 1983, and the Wookey parish data has now also been published by Burton W. Spear in volume 26 of *The Search for the Passengers of the Mary & John* (1997). Mr. Spear, who is credited with its initial discovery, shared the then-unpublished data with Ms. Chaplin at her request. The tale of the discovery and its communication should serve as an example of the gracious (and properly attributed) sharing of such data, which guarantees that the greatest number of potentially interested readers will be sure to notice it.

The bulk of the book remains similar to the (also quite sound) version published in 1978; indeed, many of the sketches have been reprinted with virtually no alterations, or have been rewritten with little alteration of content or length. While this may raise the question of the propriety of single authorship in the latest edition, the work as a whole has been revised and recast to good effect, and Ms. Chaplin's labors are clearly evident. In addition to overall format changes (punctuation, spacing, numbering of children), conforming more closely to

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modified *Register* format, many sketches—particularly the earliest and the latest ones—have been rendered more complete and precise, with more frequent parenthetical source citations (including living informants, such as the parents of listed children), and fuller notices of such increasingly common phenomena as divorces and adoptions (both into and out of the family). All in all, this is a pleasing, usable, and substantial improvement on an already sound foundation.

—Nathaniel L. Taylor

Surnames and Genealogy: A New Approach, by George Redmonds (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1997. Softcover, 292 + xviii pp. \$20.00 plus \$3.50 shipping). Order from NEHGS Sales Department, 160 N. Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114-2120, or call 1 (888) 296-3447, or fax (617) 624-0325.

This fascinating book discusses the complex changes in English surnames in the course of their history, particularly in Yorkshire and Lancashire. The “new approach” in the title refers to the author’s treatment of each surname as unique, “beginning with one person or family at a particular time and in a particular place.” Many readers will recognize ideas that Dr. Redmonds—a leading authority on English surname origins, local history, and place names—has presented in his lectures. And his writing style is as entertaining as his lectures.

Some of developments in surnames are predictable, e.g., aliases, nicknames, name changes, illegitimacy, diminutives, and abbreviations. Even more interesting are Dr. Redmonds’s explanations of changes we might never expect, yet are common to someone with his experience and knowledge of surname development. In the text and appendices Dr. Redmonds provides examples of some of the following types of changes:

- suffix confusion [“an unaccented suffix was particularly susceptible to change, and could be confused with almost any other frequent suffix”]: e.g., Snawsdale/Snawsell, Burnell/Burnett;
- assimilation into a local place name: e.g., Horsfeld/Horseforth, Oldroyd/Olderhead;
- suffix addition: e.g., Rodgers/Rogerson, Castle/Castlehouse;
- contraction: e.g., Stephenson/Stemson;
- surname confusion: e.g., Donwell/Daniel, Crosley/Crossland;
- metanalysis [last letter of first name becomes attached to surname beginning with a vowel]: e.g., William Oates/William Motes, John Ellis/John Nellis;
- metathesis [reversal of letters, especially with the letter “r”]: e.g., Brenand/Birrande, Stirley/Strelley;
- the letter “l” [one of various letters or sounds that could be omitted or substituted]: e.g., Colburne/Cowburne, Bolsover/Bowser;
- vowel change: e.g., Roodes/Roides, Sinnyer/Sunyer;
- initial letter: Kilpin/Gilping, Corbett/Gorbut.

Because the evolution of English surnames continued into the seventeenth and even eighteenth centuries, it is possible to find examples of Dr. Redmonds’s