

**THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF
THE DISTINGUISHED
SURNAME
FURLONG**

The Irish already had a system for creating hereditary surnames established when the followers of Strongbow settled in eastern Ireland. Although there was relatively little friction between the two systems because they operated according to very similar principles, the Strongbownians frequently used local surnames. In Ireland, local surnames were almost unheard of, but in England they were probably the most common form of hereditary surname. Local surnames, such as Furlong, were taken from the name of a place or a geographical feature where the person lived, held land, or was born. The surname Furlong is derived from living near a field. The surname Furlong is derived from the Old English word furlong, which denoted the length of a field. This word was comprised of the Old English words "furh," which means "furrow," and "lang," which means "long." A furlong was the technical name for a block of strips owned by several different people which constituted the unit of cultivation in the medieval open-held system of agriculture. The Furlong surname came to Ireland with the the Anglo/Norman invasion of of 1172, and the history of this family name has been woven into the tapestry of the chronicles of Ireland since that date.

Researchers have consulted books by such noted historians O'Hart, McLysaght, O'Brien; and examined transcripts from the Book of Kells, the Falaise Rolls, Battel Abbey Rolls, the Wace poem, Irish parish records, and ancient land grants, to compose this history of the name. Their conclusions are that the name Furlong was found in Dorset, where they held a family seat from very early times.

Your name, Furlong, occurred in many references, from time to time the surname was spelt Furlong, Furlang and these changes in spelling frequently occurred, even between father and son. It was not uncommon for a person to be born with one spelling, married with another, and to have yet another recorded at his wake.

From Spain, the great Milesian King sent his son north to explore the coast. Finding that his son had been murdered in Ireland by the three resident Kings (the Danans), Milesius gathered an army to take his revenge on the Irish. He died before he embarked on the trip. His remaining eight sons conquered Ireland and renamed it the land of the Scoti.

More than a millennium later, in 1172 A.D., Dermott McMurrough, in his fight for the position of Ard Righ, or High King, requested Henry II of England for assistance. Henry of England commanded the Earl of Pembroke, nicknamed Strongbow, to help Dermott in his fight for the crown of Ireland. Strongbow

recruited 2000 trained mercenaries of Norman, Welsh or Cornish background from south Wales and sailed for Ireland. The battles were swift and sure, and victory went to the trained soldiers. Strongbow doled out to his army commanders much of the confiscated Irish land in southern Ireland. Ironically, after several centuries, the invaders became as Irish as the native families.

This now Irish family Furlong emerged as a distinguished family in Dorset. The surname Furlong is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "furlang" and referred to the division of a tenantry field. In its early history the name was found in Dorset in 1242 and later became the town of the same name in Devon County. But by then the name had already reached Ireland in the wake of Strongbow, the Earl of Pembroke, in his Anglo-Norman invasion. An important branch of the family was granted land by the Earl of Pembroke and settled in Davidstown in Wexford county. John Furlong was granted the Barony of Forth in that county. During the middle ages the name flourished in England and the family established estates at Suffolk and Lancashire. Notable amongst the family up to this time was Furlong of Dorset.

The Great Potato Famine in 1845 caused widespread poverty and starvation, and the great exodus from Ireland began. Many joined the armada of sailing ships which sailed from Belfast, Dublin, Cork, Holyhead, Liverpool and Glasgow, all bound for the New World. Some called these small ships the "White Sails," others, more realistically, called them the "Coffin Ships," voyaging across the Atlantic when 25 percent of the passengers died of cholera, dysentery, typhoid and small pox.

In North America, early immigrants bearing the Furlong family name include Daniel Furlong purchased land in Philadelphia in 1774; James Furlong settled in Boston Massachusetts in 1764; Thomas Furlong settled in Maryland in 1775. Many others of that name settled in Pennsylvania in the mid-1800's. In Newfoundland, J. Furlong settled in St. John's in 1706; John settled in Gull Island in 1798; John in Harbour Grace in 1806; Richard in Cape Broyle in 1813; they also settled in Bay Bulls, Placentia, Carbonear and many more up to 1867.

Settlers began to increasingly look westward, as opportunities arose. In America, the Homestead Act (1862) offered 160 acres of land for a minimal fee; while in Canada, the Dominion Lands Act (1872) offered 160 acres to any male over the age of 21 for a ten-dollar registration fee.

Prominent bearers of the surname Furlong in recent times include: Hon. Robert Furlong, Canadian, the former Chief Justice of Newfoundland; Robert Grant

Furlong (1886-1973) American Democratic member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1943 to 1945; Charles Wellington Furlong (1874-1967) American explorer, writer, artist and photographer; Edward Walter Furlong (b.1977) Saturn Award-winning American actor; Campbell James Marie Furlong (b.1974) New Zealand cricketer; and Monica Furlong (1930-2003) British author, journalist, and activist.

The Coat of Arms for the family name Furlong was:

A silver shield with two black bars between eight black martlets.

The Crest was:

An eagle's head.

And the family Motto for this distinguished Irish name was:

Liberalitas

Motto translation:

Liberty

PUBLISHED GENEALOGIES FOR THE NAME FURLONG

"DULANEY-FURLONG AND KINDRED FAMILIES" BY ROLAND DULANEY FURLONG.

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