

* The Name Beebe and its Origins

There are many variations within the same family group, even at the same time and for the same individual:

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|--------|--------|--------|
| Beebe | Beeby | Beebee |
| Beebey | Beebie | Beby |
| Bebee | Bebe | |

Before about 1900 few agricultural country people were able to read, write, or even spell their own names. It was left to the person registering an event to write what he thought was an appropriate spelling of the name as it was pronounced to him. Many documents, where they have been signed, show typically "**X**the mark of Silas Beeby ", for example.

William Beeby (father of my great grandfather Silas) had his name spelled **Beebey** in 1836 when he married Mary Ann, again **Beebey** in 1838 at the Christening of his daughter Eliza, and also **Beebey** in 1841 at the Christening of another daughter, Elizabeth. These events all took place in Keysoe in Bedfordshire, quite probably with the same vicar.

In 1846 he became **Beebee** for Harriet Anne's Christening at Bedford Holy Trinity, and then **Beeby** at the Christening of Julia in 1851 at Bedford St Paul, different vicar, different spelling.

Silas was **Beeby** when he married in 1873 at Bedford Holy Trinity but **Beebe** for the Christening of Sarah Elizabeth Grace in 1876 and again Harriet in 1877, both at Bedford St Paul. I wonder if it was a different vicar.

The spelling **Beebe** has been used consistently in my family by all descendants of Silas (from 1876).

Another example of the variation that occurs in records can be seen in the Broughton parish records of John Beebe / Beebis / Beeboe / Beebee / Beebie / Baybye and finally Beeby! Quite an impressive list for just one person.

The spelling **Beeby** is perhaps the most typical in England (view the table - "Beebe name variants 1881 census").

Malcolm Bebb has an excellent web site dedicated to his family name. He explores the origins of that name and gives a lot of information about Bebb around the world. Bebb Website.

The following pages of text have been edited from the original notes which I believe were written by Clarence Beebe of Connecticut USA. Part of the text was obtained from an article found on Compuserve.

Some tradition and facts concerning the origin of the name of Beebe

It may please the ultra-enthusiast to know that the name apparently appears in records of remote

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antiquity, as seen in the following memorandum:

"One of the Kings of the Second Dynasty in Egypt, dated something like 3000 BC, was Bebi whose hieroglyphic is given in the table of Sakkarah, a monument discovered by M. Mariette in Egypt. This table represents a priest named Tounars rendering homage in the name of Rameses II to a series of 58 kings belonging to the first six dynasties."

In "Book 21" of "The History of Rome", by Livy, is related how one Quintus Baebius, a man of advanced years, was sent as an ambassador to Hannibal and to the Carthaginian Senate to demand peace or war. This is dated, "year of Rome 534".

Coming to later times, there is a tradition of French origin which is very plausible. Ancient family papers, said to be in the archives of Aston Hall, Warwickshire, England, show that this

family descended from the two Norman Knights - Richard and William de Beebe - who were of the Royal Guard of William the Conqueror. They passed over to England at the time of the conquest and were "by the King granted manors in Warwickshire", where the family lived up to the close of the Commonwealth.

During his visit to England in 1893, Clarence Beebe from USA took the opportunity to copy a portion of the ancient Norman Rolls which are kept in the Tower of London and which date from the reign of King John. There he found:

"Willelmus Babbe Pracpositus, AD 1204 who, with four other jurors, adjudged the values of property".

One of the earliest authentic records of the family name found by Clarence Beebe is in Bridge's History of Northamptonshire, England, printed in 1740.

Under the heading "Town of Brackley, Sutton Hundred", occurs the following:

"Here was formerly an Infirmary or Hospital for the sick, dedicated to St. Leonard. From 1297 to 1417, it was governed by masters, one of which was Joh. Beby, February 10, 1403".

At East Farndon, Joh. Beby was incumbent of the church of St. John the Baptist, sometime between the years of 1398 and 1411. At Castre is a church dedicated to St. Kyneburga. Within the porch of this church, around the moulding of the south door, is cut in wood, this inscription:

"Ricardus Beby, Rector Ecclesie DeCastre, Fecit Fieri"

To those interested in knowing that one branch of the family has the right and title to a Coat of Arms, here is a description found in Burkes Encyclopedia of Heraldry:

A blue shield with golden Chevron and three gold bees.

Crest:-A golden Beehive indicative of industry, vigilance and persistency of purpose.

Motto: So Defendendo.

Arms: Dilley (Willey) Court, England.

The founder of this family was a Non-Conformist Chaplain to the regiment of Colonel Knight in (Geo.) Monk's (i.e. Duke of Albermarle) army, about 1640.

The American Connection

The church registers of St. Andrews (in the village of Broughton, Northamptonshire) date from 1560

and verify the names of John Beebe¹ and his children who emigrated to America about the year 1650, as stated in his will. This will is on file in Hartford, Connecticut.

They were probably puritans and known in England as husbandmen, or yeomen.

Probably nine out of ten of the families named Beebe in America descend from the three sons of this John 1, to wit, John², Samuel⁴, and James⁹.

They landed in Boston Harbour and, working their way westward, were influential in the settlement of New London, Connecticut. From here the family branched out in all directions.

Individuals of the family were prominent in "*King Philips War*", especially John², who with his men marched through the wilderness and relieved the soldiers of Major Talcott on the Connecticut River.

The Family of Samuel⁴, became large land owners and inter-married with well-to-do families. The name is found among the Minute Men of '76, and in the Armies of the Revolution as officers and enlisted men. Special services under General Washington were rendered by a descendant of John².

The pension rolls of the Revolution contain a number of Beebe family names. Bezaleel Beebe was especially prominent in that war, and James a descendant of James², became a member of the Order of the Cincinnati.

In 1775, a descendant of John² called Martin, prepared with others a memorial to Congress recommending the passage of a Declaration of Independence.

The name is variously spelled in the same document BEEBE, BEBY, BEEBY, BEEBEE.

*John Beebe, who immigrated to America in 1650, died on ship and left a will in which mention is made of his children, and of the fact that he came from Broughton in Northamptonshire. Clarence Beebe, the author of much of this text, "had the pleasure of visiting this quaint old English village in June 1893, and verified from the church records the names of John, his wife's Christian name Rebecca, and those of his children, as well as the dates of their birth".

Kettering is the principal town of the district in which Broughton is situated.

In Kettering the name of Beebe is still a familiar one. The village of Broughton, a few miles from Kettering, is a large, straggling, old fashioned villiage situated partly in hollows and partly on elevated knolls. There were probably not more than two or three of its hundred houses which were not thickly covered with thatch. The church of St. Andrew, an ancient building, was naturally the most prominent to the view, situated in the centre of the village, and surrounded by trees.

Approaching the church, the roadway is embowered by the trees on either side. The church combines the early decorated Norman and Perpendicular styles. It includes chancel, nave, aisles, and north and south porches. There is a tower clock and a chime of five bells.

The church was rebuilt in 1828, and fully restored in 1854. It contains a beautifully carved stone font of the Perpendicular period (1600). The carving was the gift of the Duke of Buccleuch.

Broughton Church Registers date from 1560. The surrounding church-yard is replete with moss-grown memorials of the past. The Registers are kept securely in an iron box in the crypt of the church. They are