

Possible Origins & Variations Of The Surname 'Ives'

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this terse 6-page treatise is to bring together diverse information on the possible origins of the surname, "Ives" and to note some possible reasons for the wide variations in its spelling (variations that have been encountered over the centuries). This brief is not intended to be a primer on the paleography, the typography, or the orthography of the English language.

ORIGINS

The name, "Ives," has been noted as possibly being derived from several languages and, hence, could denote one or more of several terms. As Arthur Ives notes, "This name owes its origin to the Old Tuetonic *ivo*, yew. It is traced as follows: Old Norse, *iv*, later *yr*; Old Frisian, *if*; Dutch *iif*; Old High German *iwa*, modern *eide*; Old English *iw*; Anglo Saxon *iw*, *eow*, *eah*, yew or yew-tree (Ives: 1928:8). Ives goes on with a detailed listing (although nothing is attributed as to its source) and description of a number of historic personages who have a surname or patronymic starting with "Iv..." (Ibid.).

It also has been noted that the name Ives (Welsh) and Iver/Ive/Ives (Gaelic) means chief or leader. The name Ives (Danish) means zeal or fervor (Ives: 1928:8). Reaney notes that 'Eves' in Old English means the 'border' or 'edge' of a wood or hill (Reaney:50, 71).

A web page, on the Ives surname, on the My Heritage genealogy web site, states, "This unusual and interesting surname derives from the Norman personal name "Ivo", a short form of any of the various Germanic compound names with a first element "iv", from the Old Norse "yr", plural "ifar" meaning yew, bow, a weapon generally made from the supple wood of the yew tree. The name was introduced into England at the time of the Conquest, and enjoyed great popularity, reinforced by such bearers of the name as St. Ivo, Bishop of Chartres, and a 13th Century Breton, St. Ivo, who became the patron saint of lawyers."

(https://lp.myheritage.com/last-name/data-3?tr_account=454-121-8085&utm_source=ppc_google&utm_campaign=mh_search_us_en_des_sup_bmm_lastnamees-viz&tr_ad_group=adgroup18&tr_brand=1&research_last_name=ives&lang=&keyword=&tr_size=&tr_camp_id=720622950&tr_ag_id=39348322244&tr_network=g&tr_keyword=%2Bives%20%2Bfamily&tr_placement=&tr_matchtype=b&tr_position=1o2&tr_creative=166937508381&tr_device=c&tr_device_model=&tr_extension_id=&tr_target_id=kwd-72871993636&tr_location=9029609&tr_placement_target=&gclid=CKqT842c19ECFOYdaQod9pUPYA)

The Internet Surname Database notes,:

“This unusual and interesting surname derives from the Norman personal name "Ivo", a short form of any of the various Germanic compound names with a first element "iv", from the Old Norse "yr", plural "ifar" meaning yew, bow, a weapon generally made from the supple wood of the yew tree. The name was introduced into England at the time of the Conquest, and enjoyed great popularity, reinforced by such bearers of the name as St. Ivo, Bishop of Chartres, and a 13th Century Breton, St. Ivo, who became the patron saint of lawyers. St. Ives in Cambridgeshire takes its name from the church dedicated to a legendary Persian bishop, said to have lived there as a hermit. St. Ives, in Cornwall, however, is named from a 5th Century female Irish saint. "Ives" is the patronymic form of the name Ive, the "s" meaning son of. The surname dates back to the late 12th Century (see below), and early recordings include John Ives (1327) in the Subsidy Rolls of Sussex. London Church Records list the christening of Joyce, daughter of Richarde Ives, on January 24th 1588 at St. Giles, Cripplegate.

(<https://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Ives>)

Unfortunately, whether of Danish, Old English, Celtic, Frisian, Welsh, Norse, Gaelic, Persian, German, Norman, Dutch, or other origin(s), no evidence exists, to this compiler's knowledge, to connect any pre-1500 “Ives” or “Iv...” in Europe to any of the progenitors of any of the 19 identified Ives lineages that are known in the New World today. Having the same surname as someone else is an indication of only, and just, that; by itself it does not confer any familial or genealogical connection or relationship.

THE CHANGING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The actual standard use of surnames was rather a hit and miss situation until the 1300s when two pieces of English legislation 'forced' the issue and their use. “The first was the introduction of a poll tax in 1379, which led the government to collect the name of every person in the country aged sixteen or over, and the second was the enactment of the Statute of Additions in 1413, which required that all legal documents contain not just the person's given name, but also his or her occupation and place of abode.” (Bryson: 224)

It is quite possible that some surname spelling variations of “Ives” may have been due to differences, or similarities, in the use of, depiction of, or pronunciation of letters, vowels, and consonants over time and across both geographical and cultural space. The early-to-modern English language has, from time to time, borrowed letters/sounds/symbols from Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Norse, Germanic, and other languages.

The “comings and goings” of 'letters' in the English alphabet include the three relatively well-known:

“W” – literally “*double u*” – this letter arrived in the 6th century via Anglo-Saxon borrowing this sound from their runic alphabet to supplement the Roman alphabet.

“þ” – known as '*thorn*' and representing the “th” sound as in the word “thorn” – this letter arrived in the 6th century via Anglo-Saxon borrowing this sound from their runic alphabet to supplement the Roman alphabet.

“ð” – known as '*eth*' and representing a slightly different “th” sound as in the word “thing” – this letter arrived in the 6th century via Anglo Saxon borrowing this sound from their runic alphabet to supplement the Roman alphabet; and it is still used in Ireland (Bryson: 133).

The aforementioned appearances and disappearances of English language 'letters' do not include these lesser well-known and no longer used letters/sounds: the *ash*, the *eng*, the *long s*, the *ond*, the *ethel*, the *that*, the *insular g*, the *yogh*, and the *wynn* (<http://mentalfloss.com/article/31904/12-letters-didnt-make-alphabet>). Nor does it include the *ampersand* (&) which was recited by schoolchildren in the 1800s as “and per se and” – the 27th, and last, letter of our English alphabet at that time. (<http://blog.dictionary.com/ampersand/>).

And, then, there is the situation with “V-U.” The classic Roman alphabet had only 23 letters (J, U, and W were 'missing' at that time). The symbol depiction “V-U” was a functional allograph (variations of each other in another context) of the same sound. The “V” was considered the consonant form and the “U” the vowel form of the pair – but the symbol “V” usually stood for them both. Normally (but not exclusively), “V” was used for a capital letter while “u” was used for a lowercase letter. The “U” as a distinct and separate letter didn't really come into regular use until the 1600s with the introduction of the various printers' standardized letter shapes (<http://blog.dictionary.com/theletteru/>).

Then there is the “I-J” situation. There was no “j” sound in classical Latin (“Julius” was written, “Iulius”), and the glyph “j” was simply a symbolic graphic embellishment of the letter “i.” As time went on, the “i” and “j” were used typographically to express the sound of both the vowel and the consonant form of this 'letter' respectively. The regular use of the “J” as a separate alphabetical letter did not come into regular use until the mid to late 1500s; until then, both “I”/“i” and “J”/“j” were often used interchangeably. (<http://blog.dictionary.com/j/>).

Thus, for much of written/recent history, “Ives” and “Jues” could represent the same word and would have been pronounced the same.

VARIATIONS

One cause of a spelling variation may well be due to idiosyncratic name spelling on the part of an Ives-named person themselves, or on the part of a third-party scribe/transcriber of the same general time period. The standardization of English spelling is a relatively recent occurrence. Historically, even those who wrote their own name would write it with variant spellings. For example, William Shakespeare never signed his own name with the same spelling in any of his six known actual signatures, and he even spelled it 2 different ways in his own handwritten will. (Bryson: 135-136)

Another cause of spelling variations can be due to attempts to read/transliterate historic handwriting... some of which has especially florid writing styles... which can add to our present-day confusion. English scribes used a variety of handwriting styles (e.g., Gothic Book Hand, Cursive Hands, Court Hands) and a modern attempt to translate some of those letters/words can be a daunting task indeed. More 'recent' or 'modern' handwriting styles (e.g., Palmer, Spencerian Script, Round Hand, Copperplate Script, Engrosser's Script) may not be all that much easier to read or decipher in some cases. And it is well worth noting that, historically, being able to read the printed word did not necessarily equate with being able to read any of the various handwriting styles (e.g., Flourishing Alphabet, German Hand, Italian Hand). Handwriting often was part technical accuracy and part artistry.

Distinguishing letters/words within different generalized handwriting styles and, especially, within a wide variety of the individual handwriting uses that were based on those general styles can require some serious detective work. The initial handwritten capital letters “I,” “J,” “F,” “S,” “P,” “S,” and “T” easily can become confused (depending on the handwriting styles – the more florid the style is, the more easily confusable it can be)). Depending on the amount of physical closure, the thickness and condition of the writing nib, or on the angle at which a letter is written, it also can be difficult to differentiate among lowercase “a,” “o,” “e,” “u,” “c,” “r,” “s,” or “v.” Similarly, “n,” “m,” “u,” “v,” “o,” “s,” and “r” can be difficult to differentiate among.

Certain factors that may influence both an individual's handwriting and their spelling at any point in time may be impossible for us to ascertain today. These unknowable factors include the degree and nature of individual literacy; the speed at which the handwriting was done; the degree of deliberate care that may have been (or not) taken while writing; the individual's knowledge of any generally accepted spelling conventions; the individual's acquaintance with, and use of, various general or idiosyncratic handwriting styles; and the health of the writer at that time.

A few good online resources concerning using, reading, and deciphering historic handwriting styles include:

How To Read 18th Century British-American Writing

http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/writing.html

Styles of Script

<http://www.iampeth.com/lesson/business-handwriting/styles-script>

Handwriting Tips

<http://www.paperpenalia.com/history.html>

The History And Demise Of Cursive Writing

<https://joannedi.wordpress.com/2014/07/24/history-and-demise-of-cursive-writing/>

History's Paper Trail: What Handwriting & Spelling Reveal About Early America

<https://livesandlegaciesblog.org/2015/07/29/historys-paper-trail-what-handwriting-spelling-reveals-about-early-america/>

Historical Handwriting and Its Impact In Colonial Times

<http://www.drexdoclab.com/historical-handwriting-and-its-impact-in-colonial-times/>

Old Handwriting – Deciphering Old Handwriting in Genealogy

<http://www.amberskyline.com/treasuremaps/oldhand.html>

Tips For Reading Old Handwriting

https://www.ancestry.com/wiki/index.php?title=Tips_for_Reading_Old_Handwriting

Handwriting Styles

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/medievaldocuments/handwritingstyles.aspx>

And, finally, spellings of, or variations on the name, “Ives,” can be misinterpreted by electronic scanning devices or by copy-transfer algorithms that are engaged in transcription and indexing processes. There are dozens of handwriting styles and hundreds of typographic fonts that were, or are, in use. The caveats noted above with regard to reading/deciphering potentially confusing uppercase and lowercase letters also can apply to electronic devices that are designed to transfer letters and words from a handwritten or “hard printed for” into a machine-printed/readable format. For example, a poorly formed or partially occluded handwritten (or typeset) “e” could be read by an electronic device as an “e,” “a,” “t,” “o,” “i” or some other letter.

Arthur Ives notes that, “In old Connecticut records the name is frequently written *Ive*, *Eve*, *Eves*, and *Eives*. He also includes a brief list of other spellings/misspellings of the Ives surname; and these are interleaved into the listing given below, and followed by an asterisk to indicate that they occur in his *magnus opus* (Ives: 8-9).

I have seen many of the alternate spellings and 'misspellings' of “Ives” noted below on handwritten documents from historic periods, as well as on more modern census and other 'official' documents. The veracity of their actual equivalency to the surname “Ives” was ascertained by other data verification procedures and by matching temporal, event, or geographic information or occurrences.

Eives*, Eues, Eve*, Eves*, Evez, Evis, Eviz, Evs, Evz, Emes, Eres;

Fues, Foes; Fuis;

Gues;

Iues, Iuo, Ive*, Ivea, Iven, Iver, Iveri, Ivery, Ivers, Ivey, Imes, Ivez, Iviz, Ivo, Ivonis, Ivs, Iwes, Iwez, Iwiz, Ivz, Ires, Ines, Irea, Ivis*, Ivett*, Ison*, Ivers*, Ivision*, Iveson*, Iverson*, Iwis*, Ivatts*, Ivy*;

Joes, Jues, Juos, Jves, Jvis, Jviz, Jvs, Jvz, Jres, Jors;

Orns, Oves;

Pues;

Sues, Sves;

Tues, Tuis, Tvis, Toes, Tves;

Yuo, Yve, Yves, Yvez, Yvis, Yviz, Yvs, Ymes, Yvz, Yrvs.

It also should be noted that a verbal response as to surname from a person named Ives to anyone making a written notation of that information is open to yet another level of “interpretation” – does the person doing the transcribing know how to spell “Ives” when they write that name down into official records, or are they making a 'best guess' based on what it was that they thought they heard the person named Ives say (e.g., Ivez, Ivz, Eives), – or on how they 'thought' that the word “Ives” should be spelled or transcribed?

REFERENCES

Bryson, Bill 1990, The Mother Tongue. William Morrow, HarperCollins Publishers, New York

Ives, Arthur Coon 1928, Genealogy of The Ives Family Including a History of the Early Settlements and the movement from Quinnipiac to the Black River Country. The Hungerford-Holbrook Company, Watertown, NY.

Reaney, Percy H., 1968, The Origin of English Surnames. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London,

Last Name Directory

https://lp.myheritage.com/last-name/data-3?tr_account=454-121-8085&utm_source=ppc_google&utm_campaign=mh_search_us_en_des_sup_bmm_lastnames-viz&tr_ad_group=adgroup18&tr_brand=1&research_last_name=ives&lang=&keyword=&tr_size=&tr_camp_id=720622950&tr_ag_id=39348322244&tr_network=g&tr_keyword=%2Bives%20%2Bfamily&tr_placement=&tr_matchtype=b&tr_position=1o2&tr_creative=166937508381&tr_device=c&tr_device_model=&tr_extension_id=&tr_target_id=kwd-72871993636&tr_location=9029609&tr_placement_target=&gclid=CKqT842c19ECFQYdaQod9pUPYA

Surname Database: Ives Last Name Origin

<https://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Ives>