## What's Behind a Family Name?

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

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



A potter at work

the long fellow or John with the white head. Or he got his father's given name as a surname: **John Peters**, John Peterson.

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

- 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

	Baker,
	of Birth: Eastwood,
Appearance or	Character: <i>Short,</i>
	ther's name: <i>Harris</i> ,