Payne

The surname Payne, however it is spelled, indicates a Norman origin. We know that Rollo or Rolf, Duke of Normandy, in the ninth century became a convert to Christianity. The people of his Dukedom, however, outside the larger communities, resisted the new religion - as is usually the case in all innovations, which first find favor in the cities, then expand gradually throughout the country. Now the word "paganus" meant originally and solely a dweller in the country, as distinguished from one who dwells in the city. So general was the refusal at first of the inhabitants of the country to accept the Christian religion, that to be a "Countryman" came simply to mean an "unbeliever," and the word "paganus" thus took on a double meaning. The name was eventually applied to all those who refused the Christian baptism.

When William the Conquerer went from Normandy to England in 1066, he was accompanied by many of this class of people, and so the term became incorporated into the English language with its new meaning. About this same time, the habit of using surnames also became prevalent, and as people usually chose something with which they had a previous connection, the name of "Paganus" came into common use as a family designation. It gradually changed its form, however, to one of several variations: Pagan, Payen, Paine, Pain, Payn or Payne.

The name is found wherever the Norman exodus pervaded. In Italy, for example, it assumed the form of Paganini or Pagani.

At a time when so large a proportion of men were soldiers, and remaining inhabitants were largely countrymen, the name "Pagan" was applied rather contemptuously to all those who did not serve their King in a military fashion. After the Christian era began, the followers of Christ were always considered the "soldiers" of Christ; those who did not join His religious army were "pagans" . . . just as those who had not belonged to the civil army were named. From this application, there was read into the word the meaning of "non-Christian" - which the word "pagan" signifies today.

No history of the Payne family would be complete without a reference to two men who made the name a famous one in the early history of England.

The first of these is "Pagen of Domesday", 1041-1086, and the second is Hugh de Payen, a crusader and founder of the Order of Knights Templar.

When William the Conqueror became firmly established upon the English throne, he caused an inventory and appraisal of his Kingdom to be made, which included the names of all the land owners. Prominent among these was "Pagen" who is reported as holder of lands either "of the King or others," in at least sixteen different counties, and to the number of thirty-eight or more holdings in all; and the significant remark is that "he could go whither so ever he would."

These holdings were so located in different counties, that, leaving Hants or Hampshire by the Isle of Wight where the New Forest was located, he could travel north to the wash, on the North

Sea; thence west across the island to the Irish Sea; thence south to the British Channel; thence east to the place of starting, and at every step be in a county where he owned land and consequently had right of protection. Included in this area is the Forest and latter principle town of Warminster, Wiltshire, England.

This was a peculiar privilege of a baron only, because of their rank and probable connection with the King.

The "Domesday Book" says Pagen of Hampshire held land directly of the king in fifteen counties. This is in the year 1080. He had settled in England from Normandy before the conquest, and so he was there share with the "Conqueror" the crown of success.

He died about the same time that the "Domesday Book" was compiled in 1086, leaving Edmund, his eldest son and heir, to inherit his big estate and favor with the king.

Hugh De Payen

Right after the Norman conquest of England came the Crusades. The first of these had importance to the Payne name. In the year 1119, at the termination of the first crusade, the celebrated Hugh de Payen remained behind for the purpose of further securing the grand results of the crusade. For months he acted as guide to help guard pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre from attack of the Saracens. He also helped the Pilgrims cross the Jordan to the city of Jerusalem.

In this capacity, he organized a force of men to accomplish this goal. In company with Godfrey de St. Omer, he instituted an order known as the Templars of the Cross, the sole object of which was to further the great objects of the Crusaders' mission by protecting the Holy Places and rendering safe journey of all pilgrims to the Holy Shrine.

At first this Knightly Order had only seven other members, Hugh and the others were poor, but were supported heavily by the King of Jerusalem, Baldwin II. He went so far as to give them lodging in the palace. They didn't hide their poverty, on their seal they adopted a horse with two riders.

Soon the order grew in number and power, it soon became the most powerful of all such organizations that existed at that time in the world. It is said to have controlled the fate of nations, and to have demanded and received acknowledgement of their rights from the Pope. It existed from 1178 to 1312. It was ended after five or six years of bloody battles supported and lead by Philip the Fair of France and Pope Clement V. It had possessions in many countries and they were given to the country where they resided. It is said the "Knights of Christ" in Portugal is still the order that existed back then in that country only under a new name.

Who was Hugh de Payen and who was his family? He was a Norman, he was only a first or second generation after surnames were first kept. His name indicates he was the son of a father who bore the same name, and who lived during the war and reign of the Conqueror.

The suddenness and success with which he entered his work and organization of the Knightly Order and found favor with the King of Jerusalem, shows that he must have had a "good start" in life. It would have been nearly impossible for an average foot soldier to rise to such status, but means Hugh probably started with some status. He must have had the prestige of a noble birth or some other merit. This is supported by the fact that Baldwin II King of Jerusalem gave him favor and lodging.

We remember that Pagen of Doomsday was one of William the Conqueror's chief barons. Robert, the Duke, under whom Hugh went to the Crusades, was the son of William the Conqueror. So if Hugh were Pagen's son, then this would place two sons in direct communication with each other. This assumption is highly probable and would explain Hugh's favor with the King of Jerusalem. This would make one wonder why Hugh was poor as we know he was if his dad was a chief baron, with all those lands of the king. English custom held that one father passed on to the eldest son all his lands, and possessions, and monies, except that which was needed to support ones spouse, then that to passed to the eldest son. The younger sons were left poor and without anything to start from. We know Pagen's oldest son was Edmund.

The Doomsday Book has and extract that reads "Edmund, the son of Pagen, holds of the king, and Hugh holds of him." This says that Edmund had someone named Hugh holding land or some possession for him. We can not be certain that these two Hugh's are positively the same but it would appear to be most certainly so. Because only Edmund and Hugh's Christian names were given implies as was the custom that his surname was the same as him whom he held land under, and that was under "the son of Pagen."

Sources...

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