

IS YOUR NAME ANDREWS — OR

Since surnames became generally established in an hereditary form during the fifteenth century, changes have most often occurred as a result of variations in their phonetic transcription. Andrews, Andrus, Androess, Anders, and many other variants are all recognizable as the same name, though only Andrews in this group became firmly established and widely adopted. The further development, Anderson, might be supposed to have become established as a separate surname at an early date, but the following four examples from parishes in Hertfordshire illustrate that this was not always so.

BARLEY

James Andrews married Elizabeth Searle in 1715. They had four sons, of whom three — James, John and William — grew to adulthood, married and had children. All used the surname Andrews at marriage, and at the baptism of their children, both sons and daughters, until 1759. Then in 1759 William and his wife Elizabeth who had already had a daughter Jemima Andrews, called their first and apparently only son Noah, and at his baptism their surname was recorded as Anderson. In the following year William, the son of John and his wife Mary, was baptised and on this occasion they also used the name Anderson. At the baptism of a younger daughter, Susannah, three years later, they reverted to the name Andrews.

The eldest son of John and Mary was John II, who continued to use the name Andrews in 1775 when he married another Mary. But when this Mary died in 1825 she was described as the "wife of John Anderson". John II and his wife always used the surname Andrews when baptising their children, both boys and girls. At the marriage of their eldest son John III, his surname was recorded as Anderas, a simple mis-spelling, but he used the name Anderson at the baptism of his own three children — two girls and a boy — and his wife, who survived him, remarried in 1818 as Ann Anderson.

The son of John III, born in 1808, was thus called Thomas Anderson. He and his wife Ellen had five children of whom the first (Maria, born 1835) and the fourth (Job, born 1848) were surnamed Anderson, while the others were all called in the register Andrews.

In Barley, on this evidence, the use of the name Anderson seems only partially to have superseded that of Andrews from about 1759, and Andrews remained the more common usage at the time of baptism. During the 90 years after 1759 the name Andrews was used at twelve baptisms in the parish, and Anderson at only five, each name being fairly evenly spread throughout the period.

BRAUGHING

Noah Anderson of Barley, who as we have seen was baptised, using that surname,

COULD IT BE ANDERSON ?

in 1759, married in Braughing in 1784 using the surname Andrews. Three sons, including twins, were baptised in 1785 and 1788, when the surname used was "Anderson alias Andrews". Thereafter Noah and his numerous descendants in Braughing seem consistently to have used the name Anderson.

THERFIELD

A family called Andrew or Andrews was living in Therfield in the sixteenth century, the latest reference in the parish register being in 1620 when "John Andrews the younger" married Margaret Allen. After the usual disruption of records during the Commonwealth period, baptisms in the 1660s and 1670s include four children of Edward Anderson and his wife Mary. It would of course be unwise to take for granted a connection between Edward Anderson and the earlier Andrews family. Edward's son, Edward junior, the only one of his children known to have had a family of his own, was married twice; first, in 1694, as Edward Anderson, and second, in 1706, as Edward Andrews. There were no children of the first marriage, but all the children of the second marriage were baptised using the surname Andrews. Edward junior had five sons, four of whom married between 1730 and 1746 and one re-married in 1764. All their children, born in the period 1731-1765, were baptised (and as far as is known, married) using the surname Andrews (though two, baptised in the parish of Layston, in 1738 and 1740, were surnamed in the register "Andrews or Anderson").

Of these children (the grand-children of Edward junior) three were sons who married and had children: James, son of Ralph (married 1752); James, son of Edward III (married 1765); and Ralph, son of Ralph (married 1773).

James (married 1752) and his wife Mary had 19 children between 1753 and 1775, all recorded in the register as — Andrews. Then, in 1776, was baptised Gefrey "son of James and Mary Anderson or Andrews", though he was buried five months later as Gefrey Andrews. He was followed in 1778 by Sarah, recorded at her baptism as "daughter of James and Mary Andrews", but at her burial in the same month as "infant daughter of James and Mary Anderson or Andrews".

James (married 1765) and his wife Martha had only one child, baptised in 1771 as James Anderson.

Ralph (married 1773) and his wife Ann had two children, baptised in 1774 and 1777 using the surname Andrews, and two more in 1780 and 1784 using the surname Anderson.

Whatever the surname used at their baptism, the children of this generation were all called Anderson when they married, the earliest in 1775.

In the 60 years from 1779 to 1838, 48 persons called Anderson were married in

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Therfield. The name Andrews, however occurred only twice in the marriage register in this period, both probably being from a neighbouring parish. Apart from the son of one of these intruder marriages, who was baptised in 1800, the surname Andrews does not occur in the register of baptisms after 1778 until 1818, when the first of the children of John and Mary Andrews was baptised. This John also seems to have been unrelated to the long-established Andrews/Anderson family of Therfield.

In the case of burials, the change to Anderson was similarly overwhelming. Two of the older people seem to have clung to the name Andrews, which was used to record their burials in 1789 and 1797. But apart from these the name Andrews does not occur in the burial register after 1778 until 1852, although Anderson occurs 73 times in the meantime.

The pattern in Therfield, therefore, shows a swing from Anderson to Andrews in about 1700, and an almost complete relinquishment of the name Andrews in favour of Anderson again in the 1770s.

WALKERN

At a surprisingly late date, a Walkern family shows the strongest and most logical pattern of all. Charles Andrews, whose origin has not yet been established, married Mary Clayton in 1830. Between 1830 and 1852 they had nine children, four girls and five boys. Each of the girls was baptised using the surname Andrews, and each of the boys using the surname Anderson.

Against the register entry for the baptism of their daughter Elizabeth Andrews

in 1838 is the marginal note, "Anderson, by the vulgar"; and beside the entry for Sarah Andrews in 1841 is pencilled simply "Anderson". If these notes represent public or clerical opinion, they seem to tend in opposite directions! The two boys and two girls who were eventually married all used the name Anderson on that occasion, and Charles Andrews senior, who died in 1877, was buried as Charles Anderson.

No common practice or firm tradition can be deduced from these examples. The unanimity with which the change from Andrews to Anderson was made in Therfield in the late 1770s suggests a formal agreement or autocratic (perhaps clerical?) ruling, but there was no change in incumbent at that time. It is tempting to imagine that with a largely illiterate population the decision or whim of the parish clerk may have determined the recorded form of name, rather than the wishes or current practices of the persons concerned, but the marginal notes at Walkern discourage this view. The Walkern practice — female children Andrews, male children Anderson — might possibly follow an earlier tradition, though its late date suggests that it might just as well be evidence of the tidy mind of Charles Andrews!

ARTHUR JONES