

The Tong(ue) Family Name

from 'Tong – Tonge – Tongue and Allied Families'
second edition by H.F. Stout - 1974

The name apparently derives from two sources: from *de Tongue*, a genealogical name in Norman French and as a place name, either geographical or descriptive as *atte Tongue*, i.e., being on a tongue of land or peninsula.

There appear to have been several towns or estates by this name. In the parish of Prestwich-cum-Oldham, Lancashire, Tong Hall appears as a place name in the XIV Century. The manor or march of TVINC (Tong) appears in the Domesday Survey in the Parish of Birstall near Leeds, County York. It is generally called the 'Lordship of Tong' and from the Tongs and Mirfields was transmitted to the Tempest family. There is a Tong village in Shropshire, where the surname still exists; it has its own church and vicarage – encompassing about 3,500 acres; Tong parish in Kent holds but 1600 acres. This latter was referred to as '*Thong Castle*' having traditionally stood on the site granted for as much land as could be encompassed by *thongs* cut from the hide of a single ox. The first owner of record seems to have been Leofric, Earl of Leicester, husband of Lady Godiva, but the Norman Conquest took all titles from the Saxons and conferred them on Roger de Montgomery, created Earl of Shrewsbury, Chichester and Arundel.

The name is pronounced in England and Ireland as "*tonj*", but in America universally as "*tong*" with the hard "g". The spelling has not been fixed either; we find birth registrations as *Tong* and *Tonge*. In a list of graduates of Dublin University, one is given as *Tonge* and another as *Tong alias Toungue*. From 1652, the name has appeared in Irish records in County Wexford (New Ross) and other east Leinster counties; it is found mainly in English records, however, and in the index to publications of the Historical Mss. Commission, *Tonge* and *Tongue* are equated.

Up thru the XVI Century we must remember we are dealing with a period in which surnames were the exception rather than the rule; while surnames arrived in England well before the Continent, the Britons had their own peculiar system of cognomens which confused family name with place names and title designators.

The Tongues appear early in America in both Maryland and Connecticut. Later, they appear in New York and Pennsylvania, however, the most numerous were in Maryland. Friendshop Tongue, an attorney and possibly a younger son, came to Maryland in 1649. Thomas Tongue, indentured, was transported in 1650. Two others must have slipped by the immigration people as we find John Tongue, a merchant tailor of London, marrying Elizabeth Bean (Bayne), widow of Ralph, in 1673; he returned to England apparently. Another John Tongue married in 1664, Margaret Phillips; he died shortly after.

A John Tongue died in 16 August 1686 bequeathing to Penelope Hayden, daughter of Francis Hayden, some 800 acres. James Tongue is mentioned as infant heir in 1725 to his grandfather Heigh's estate in All Saints Parish, Calvert Co., Md. (Will 18-410)

We also find George and 'Goody' Tongue, tavernkeepers in New London, Conn. In 1652 'disturbing the peace.' A daughter, Elizabeth married Gov. Fitz-John Winthrop. The tavern remained in the family for four generations. A Captain James Tongue 'with a large family in the south' is mentioned also, which might indicate a Maryland connection. Colonial history also mentions a John Tongue in New York and Christopher Tongue, cosmetologist, in Philadelphia.

In colonial Charleston, S.C., we find Henry Tong in 1744 as a deputy surveyor. In 1698 Robert Tongue, indentured, of Farnothneare, Manchester arrived in the ship LOYALTY. In 1706, Margaret Tongue, 19, indentured, also of Manchester, arrived. A Rev. John Tongue, rector of St. Pauls Parish, and wife Anna appear much later.

There is little to connect these persons to English lineage. English genealogy, unfortunately, usually lists only the first son and /or heir in its tables which makes search most difficult.