

= Spencer ( surname ) =

Spencer ( also Spence , Spender , Spens , and Spenser ) is a surname . The origin can be traced directly to Robert d 'Abbetot , who is listed as Robert le Dispenser , a tenant @-@ in @-@ chief of several counties , in the Domesday Book of 1086 . Robert was possibly one of the Norman knights who fought alongside ( or accompanied ) William the Conqueror in the defeat of Harold II , King of England at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 . There is little doubt that both Robert and his brother Urse came to England at about the time of the Battle of Hastings . They were both beneficiaries of William over the years , and were given titles and substantial land and property ? suggesting repayment for some earlier deeds . It is likely that Robert 's first acknowledgment was his official appointment as Royal " Dispencier " sometimes expressed more grandly as " Royal Steward " , " King 's Steward " or " Lord Steward " . As dispenser of provisions to the King and his household Robert was known and recorded as Robert le Despencer or , in its Latinised form , Robertus Dispensator . There is also the possibility that Robert held this official position before arriving in England .

Robert 's adopted surname was usually written as Despenser or Dispenser ? notably in works such as the Domesday Book of 1086 and the Scottish Ragman Rolls of 1291 and 1296 . From 1066 until the 13th century the occupational name attributed to Robert d 'Abbetot existed with numerous spelling and other variations . Eventually both the " le " and " de " that frequently preceded the name were omitted . In 1392 the popular " s " in the centre of the name was discarded and replaced with the " c " seen in the present @-@ day form ? Spencer .

The surname Spencer has gained in popularity over time . In the 19th century it also become popular as a given name ? especially in the more anglicised areas of the United States .

= = Variations = =

= = = English = = =

In its transition from the French dispencier to its current form , the name Spencer has been presented and spelled in many ways ? especially through the period of its early evolution in the medieval period from c.1100 to 1350 AD . The following ( in alphabetical order ) is a selection of the many orthographic variants :

Despencer , de Expansa ( derived from expence ) , De Spencer , de Spendure , de Spens , de la Despense , De la Spence , de la Spense , del Spens , Despenser , DeSpenser , Dispencer , Dispenser , Dispensator , Dispensator , la Spens , le Despencer , le Despendur , le Despencer , le Despenser , le dispencer , le Espencer , le Espenser , le Spencer , le Spendur , Spendure , le Spenser , le Spensier , Spence , Spences , Spen , Spender , Spens , Spensar , Spense , Spenser , Spensers , Spensor , Spincer , also the rare patronymic Spencers , and the aphetic ( derived ) Spender .

Within a few generations the le ( " the " ) usually placed before Despenser was omitted . The name variant Spens first appears as Simon del Spens , dated 1300 , in the " Charters of Gisburn Priory " , Yorkshire , England , during the reign of Edward I. Spence , another form of Spens , means both " the place where provisions are kept " and the " clerk of the kitchen " . This form of the name was popular in both the north of England and in Scotland . In Fife the word referred to " a spare room beside the kitchen " , and in England to a " yard , enclosure or buttery " ? simply an abbreviation of despencer referring to the household store . The principal Scottish family of Clan Spens descend from one of the ancient Earls of Fife . John " Dispensator or Le Dispenser " appeared in a list of the tenants and vassals of Walter fitz Alan High Steward of Scotland in the period 1161 ? 1171 . Roger ' Dispensator ' witnessed a charter by Bricius de Douglas , the bishop of Moray granting the church of Deveth to Spynie between 1202 and 1222 . The family de Spens in Fife trace their ancestry back to 1170 and the " Baron de Spens d 'Estignols " , who settled in France in 1450 , and " the Count de Spens , who ranked among the first of the Swedish nobility and was generalissimo of the Swedish forces " . As a north country word for ' pantry ' , spence was used by Poet Laureate Alfred Lord

Tennyson in the sense of a refectory : " Bluff Harry broke into the spence and turn 'd the cowls adrift " ( The Talking Oak , l.47. ) .

The surnames Stewart and Stuart denote essentially the same occupation but have a completely different word derivation . They originate from the pre @-@ 7th @-@ century English words stigweard ? a compound of stig meaning household ? and weard , a guardian .

= = = Other countries and cultures = = =

Foreign Equivalents :

German : Speiser ? a steward . This is a derivative of the Middle High German spise , meaning food or supplies via the Old High German ? in turn derived from Late Latin expe ( n ) sa ( pecunia ) , or " ( money ) expended " .

Jewish ( Ashkenazic ) : Speiser ? occupational name for a grocer , from a later semantic development of " Speiser " .

Greek : Economos ? the anglicised surname derived from the Greek oikonomou ( " oi " in Greek pronounced as a long E. ) Oikon ( English = ?con ) means house in classical Greek . This surname has the same occupational derivation as Spencer but , like the surnames Stewart and Stuart , has a different etymology . The original meaning of oikonomou was a home owner but it evolved to mean estate manager , somebody who was responsible for all resources on the estate , a steward . Oikonomou was a medieval Eastern Roman title for somebody who was in charge of a project or institution ; it is still used by the Greek Orthodox church . Over time the meaning of Oikonomou has evolved from " manager of resources " to " manager of money , a treasurer " .

= = Etymology = =

Philologists have been able to track changes in the name Spencer over time ? in different dialects and languages ? as well as trace its derivation from a common ancestry . The name Spencer can be traced through its Latin and French roots to its Middle English and modern form .

Medieval Latin ? dispensa , dispensator and dispensarius ? steward .

Old French ?

a. despense ? larder

b. espenser , -ier ? dispenser of money , provisions etc . ; someone working at , or in charge of , the buttery ; a household steward

c. despendour ? steward .

Anglo @-@ French ? dispenser , -ier .

Middle English ? spens ( e ) and spence ? larder ; dispensour ? steward . With the agent suffix ? er this becomes spenser ? butler or steward .

= = = Derivation = = =

In England , up to about the time of the Norman Conquest when communities were small , each person was identifiable by a single name , usually a personal name or nickname . Picts , Gaels , Britons , Anglo @-@ Saxons , Scandinavians and Normans all originally used single names , but as the population increased , it became necessary to identify people further ? giving rise to names like John the butcher , Henry of Sutton , Roger son of Richard and William the short , which naturally evolved into John Butcher , Henry Sutton , Roger Richardson and William Short . Although a few hereditary patrilineal surnames ( those passed from father to son and daughter ) appear to have existed in before the Norman Conquest , the now traditional use of binomials ( two names , a given name and a surname ) appears to have gathered momentum at this time ? particularly after the introduction of records for personal taxation , known in England as the poll tax , first levied in 1275 . The poll tax was the historical means by which local communities recorded the registering , categorizing , and polling of citizens , free @-@ subjects and other voters .

The meaning of a surname generally derives from one of the following four sources : location (

toponym ) such as a specific place ( e.g. London , York ) or feature of the place or landscape ( e.g. Hill , Townsend ) ; a relationship ( e.g. Richardson ) ; a nickname ( e.g. Grey , Wellbeloved ) ; or an occupation or office ( e.g. Sawyer , Skinner ) . The surname Spencer relates to occupation and office .

= = Robert Despenser , Urse d 'Abbetot , and the Despenser family = =

= = = Robert Despenser = = =

Robert d 'Abbetot was the son of Almericus d 'Abbetot whose Viking ancestry has been traced back to Tancred of Hauteville ( 980 ? 1041 ) . Almericus is known to have held the position of mayor in the town of Saint @-@ Jean @-@ d 'Abbetot in Normandy . Robert , like William 's other close knights , was granted titles , lands and a high position in William 's court . In addition to his position as steward he also was given land grants in county Bedford . He held his office for the period c.1088 ? 1098 .

Robert 's last name of d 'Abbetot had no meaning in England so it was likely changed to Robert le Despenser ( many spelling variants of this name exist including Robert the Dispensor , Robert Despensator , Robert Dispenser , and Robert fitzThurstin . ) which reflected his new official position and occupation . He seems to have maintained his popularity with William because in the Domesday Book of 1086 , Robert Despenser was listed as a land tenant @-@ in @-@ chief in Gloucestershire , Leicestershire , Lincolnshire , Oxfordshire , and Warwickshire , as well as holding lands in Worcestershire obtained from the Bishop of Worcester .

Robert is assumed to have died shortly after restoring some estates to Westminster Abbey but he appears to have had no legitimate male children , as his heir was his brother Urse . He may have had a daughter , as some of his lands were inherited by the Marmion family , but it is also possible that a daughter of Urse married into the Marmion family . Robert 's office as the king 's steward may also have gone to Urse , as it was later held by Urse 's heirs . A later steward , Thurstin , might have been an illegitimate son of Robert .

= = = Robert 's brother Urse d 'Abbetot = = =

Robert Despenser 's brother , Urse d 'Abbetot ( c . 1040 ? 1108 ) , became a medieval Sheriff of Worcester and royal official . He did not take up the name Despenser . In Normandy the brothers lived in the town of Saint Jean d 'Abbetot as tenants on lands of feudal lords in the Tancarville family in the Pays de Caux region on the lower Seine .

Ralph Fitz Gerald ( Chamberlain of Tankerville ) was the elder brother of Aumary d 'Abetot . Their father was Gerold ( husband of Helisendis ) Sire de Tankerville with the hereditary office of chamberlain to the Dukes of Normandy . His younger son , Aumary , inherited the fiefs of Abetot and had two sons , Urso and Robert " Despencer " who gave the name to the noble families of Le Despencer and Spenser that trace their descent from his niece . In 1073 Urse was one of the king 's council . He rendered great service in the suppression of the rebellion of the Earls of Hereford and Norfolk and had a reputation as a spoiler and devastator of the Church . Urse 's son Roger d 'Abetot , having killed a servant of Henry I , was banished and his confiscated estates given by the king ? together with the hand of his sister Emmeline d 'Abetot ? to Walter de Beauchamp of Bedford .

However , within 2 ? 3 years of 1066 both brothers were established in England ? Urse as Sheriff of Worcestershire , supervising the construction of Worcester Castle . The Domesday survey showed Urse 's lands mostly in the West Midlands while Robert 's extended to the North Sea . Robert remained a benefactor to the Priory of St. Barbe @-@ en @-@ Auge in Normandy , which had been founded by the Tancarville lords .

Lands held by the d 'Abbetots in Worcester are recorded in Hemming 's Cartulary . The d 'Abbetot family settled mostly in Worcester where they were lords of Hindlip ( Hind Leap ) , 20 miles ( 32 km ) from Worcester , for 200 years holding the manor for a knight 's fee , that is , the service of an

armed knight in the event of war . A church has stood on the site since the 11th century . Two villages have taken the D 'Abbetot family name . Redmarley D 'Abitot lies on the extreme south @-@ west border of Worcestershire in Gloucestershire . Here the D 'Abitots owned property in the parish in the 16th century , and lived at Down House although the last member of the family is believed to have died in the 18th century . The other village is Croome D 'Abitot , which lies 7 ? 8 miles south @-@ east of Worcester . Many of the descendants of Robert Despenser and Urse achieved notoriety of various kinds and the Dispenser line has been traced for at least 10 generations .

= = = Associated families = = =

The Norman family of de Ferrers , through Henry de Ferrers , had received the largest grants of land and manors in Derbyshire and were closely related to the d 'Abbetots by marriage . Similarly , Urse 's son Roger had a sister , Emmeline , who married Walter de Beauchamp from another influential family of the time . Walter succeeded to Urse 's lands after the exiling of Roger around 1110 . Tradition has it that the Derbyshire D 'Abitots sprang either from Robert d 'Abitot or a junior branch of the Worcester d 'Abitots , although it is more likely to trace directly from Urse .

= = Heraldry = =

Heraldry , the practice of designing , displaying , describing , and recording coats of arms and badges , arose from the need to distinguish participants in combat when their faces were hidden by iron and steel helmets . The process of creating coats of arms ( these are often called " family crests " but in the heraldic traditions of England and Scotland an individual , rather than a family , had a coat of arms ) began in the eight and 9th centuries . Eventually a formal system of rules developed into increasingly complex forms of heraldry that allowed the use of coats of arms by countries , states , provinces , towns and villages in a form of civic heraldry . In more recent times coats of arms have evolved from their military origins to denote educational institutes , and other establishments , apparently leading to the modern logo and corporate livery .

The secretum or private seal of Henry le Despenser , Bishop of Norwich ( A.D. 1370 ? 1406 ) is shown here . Arms of Hugh le Despencer .

= = Hereditary names and genetic lineages = =

The possession of the surname Spencer does not necessarily indicate a hereditary relationship to Robert Despenser . Irregularities can occur with non @-@ paternity and it is possible that consecutive but unrelated people in the same occupation may well have adopted the same name resulting in the foundation of many different Spencer genetic lineages . It is known , for example , that in London in the 13th and 14th centuries trade apprentices would take on the names of their masters . Nevertheless , also in London , surnames of all kinds had become hereditary in the patrician class by the 12th century .

Nevertheless , the genetic similarity of people with identical surnames has been shown to be quite high , especially those with rarer surnames . It might seem an almost insurmountable task to determine the true lineage of contemporary Spencers when such an " occupational " name probably has many founders . Nevertheless , modern genetics now has the capacity to discriminate relationships at an increasingly detailed resolution both in terms of close recent ancestry and distant ancestry . Many people are now using gene testing laboratories as part of a surname DNA project to resolve not only who their close relations are around the world , but also the migration patterns of their ancestors over the 50 @,@ 000 years since modern man left Africa .

In America many Spencers have been traced back genetically to four Spencer brothers : William Spencer 1601 ? 1640 , Thomas Spencer 1607 ? 1687 , Michael Spencer 1611 ? 1653 , and Gerard Spencer 1614 ? 1685 .

= = The Spencer aristocracy = =

The English aristocratic Spencer family has resided at their ancestral home at Althorp , Northamptonshire , since the early 16th century . The Estate now covers 14 @, @ 000 acres ( 57 km2 ) in Northamptonshire , Warwickshire and Norfolk . From pre @-@ Tudor times the Spencers had been farmers , coming to prominence in Warwickshire in the 15th century when John Spencer became feoffee of Wormleighton in 1469 , and a tenant at Althorp in 1486 . His nephew , another John , used the gains from trade in livestock and commodities to buy both properties . He was knighted in 1504 and died in 1522 . John 's descendants expanded the family holdings through business dealings and marriage into the peerage . The family is related through marriage to the Churchills of Blenheim Palace , a line that included the Dukes of Marlborough and Winston Churchill . From the Althorp line came the Earls of Sunderland , the later Dukes of Marlborough , and the Earls Spencer . The family captured international attention when Lady Diana Frances Spencer married Prince Charles on 29 July 1981 , and her death in a car crash in Paris on 31 August 1997 .

= = Notable Spencers = =

The following is a small selection of notable Spencers .

= = = 13th Century = = =

Hugh le Despenser I ( died 1238 ) was a wealthy land owner in the East Midlands of England , as well as High Sheriff of Berkshire .

Sir Hugh le Despencer , 1st Baron le Despencer ( 1223 ? 1265 ) son of Hugh le Despenser I was an important ally of Simon de Montfort during the reign of Henry III . He served briefly as Justiciar of England ( Chief Justice ) in 1260 and as Constable of the Tower of London and the castles of Shrewsbury , Bruges , and Balsover .

Hugh le Despenser , 1st Earl of Winchester ( 1262 ? 1326 ) the elder Despenser , was for a time the chief adviser to King Edward II of England .

Hugh Despenser the Younger ( 1286 ? 1326 ) became Royal Chamberlain in 1318 and the favourite of Edward II of England but developed a reputation for greed and , after falling out with the Barons , was accused of treason . He was forced into exile in 1321 with his father , who later fled to Bordeaux . Hugh was captured and sentenced to public execution by hanging ( for thievery ) , and drawing and quartering ( for treason ) .

= = = 14th Century = = =

Edward le Despenser ( 1310 ? 1342 ) was the third eldest son of Hugh le Despenser the Younger by his wife Eleanor de Clare .

Edward le Despencer , 1st Baron le Despencer , KG ( also called Despenser ) ( c . 24 March 1335 or 1336 ? 11 November 1375 ) was the son of Edward le Despenser ( 1310 ? 1342 ) and Anne , the sister of Henry , Lord Ferrers of Groby . He succeeded as Lord of Glamorgan in 1349 .

Thomas le Despenser , 1st Earl of Gloucester ( 22 September 1373 ? 13 January 1400 , Bristol ) was the son of Edward le Despenser , 1st Baron le Despencer , whom he succeeded in 1375 .

Richard le Despenser , 4th Baron Burghersh ( 1396 ? 1414 ) was the son and heir of Thomas le Despenser , 1st Earl of Gloucester ( 1373 ? 1400 )

= = = 16th Century = = =

John Spencer ( 1524 ? 1586 ) , owner of Althorp and MP

Edmund Spenser ( c . 1552 ? 13 January 1599 ) was an English poet best known for The Faerie Queene , an epic poem celebrating ? through fantastical allegory ? the Tudor dynasty and Elizabeth I. He is recognized as one of the premier craftsmen of Modern English verse in its infancy .

## == 17th Century ==

Col. Nicholas Spencer ( 1633 ? 1689 ) was an English merchant born at Cople , Bedfordshire , who emigrated to the Colony of Virginia , where he served as land agent for his cousin Thomas Colepeper , 2nd Baron Colepeper . A planter with extensive landholdings , Spencer later served in the Virginia House of Burgesses , as Secretary and President of the Council of the Virginia Colony , and as Acting Governor . With his friend John Washington , Col. Spencer patented the Mount Vernon estate land grant .

## == 19th Century ==

Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer KCMG ( 23 June 1860 ? 14 July 1929 ) was a British @-@ Australian biologist and anthropologist .

Herbert Spencer ( 27 April 1820 ? 8 December 1903 ) was an English philosopher , prominent classical liberal political theorist , and sociological theorist of the Victorian era .

## == 20th Century ==

Elizabeth Spencer ( soprano ) was a recording artist for Thomas Alva Edison .

Percy Spencer ( 9 July 1894 ? 8 September 1970 ) American inventor of the microwave oven .

Diana , Princess of Wales , ( Diana Frances ; née Spencer ; 1 July 1961 ? 31 August 1997 ) was the first wife of Charles , Prince of Wales .

Prince William , Duke of Cambridge eldest son of Diana , Princess of Wales second in line to the thrones of the United Kingdom and fifteen other Commonwealth realms .

Prince Harry second son of Diana , Princess of Wales .

Cliff Spencer , co @-@ author of the original implementation of the Unix utility sudo

## = = Popularity , numbers and distribution = =

There is strong evidence that despite population movement in the 19th Century most people stayed relatively near to their place of birth . The greatest density of Spencers in present @-@ day England is in Nottinghamshire , followed by Derbyshire ( see below ) . Derby and Notts were closely connected at the time of Domesday , and up until the time of Elizabeth I had the same Sheriff . The d 'Abbetot family had holdings in Croome , Hindlip and Redmarley as well as Clopton and Acton Beauchamp .

In North America early settlement of Spencers date to Thomas Spencer in Virginia in 1623 ; William Spencer , Cambridge , Massachusetts in 1630 ; Thomas Spencer , Maine 1630 . Col. Nicholas Spencer arrived in Virginia in the 1650s and subsequently served as Acting Governor . An account of Spencers in America has been published by Ancestry.com.

Spencers arriving in Australia with the convicts of the First Fleet in 1788 were Daniel Spencer from Dorchester , John Spencer , and Mary Spence from Wigan . With the Third Fleet in 1791 came John Spencer from Lancaster and Thomas Spencer from London .

Statistics for popularity , numbers and distribution of Spencers are presented in the tables below :

FPM = frequency per million