

# Origins and Statistics

## The Origin of Warburton

The surname Warburton comes from the village of the same name. The village is situated on the south side of the river Mersey, in what was formerly part of the county of Cheshire. It lies east of Warrington and west of Altrincham.

The following story of the founding and naming of Warburton village is taken from **Warburton: The Village and the Family** by Norman Warburton, published by The Research Publishing Company in 1970. The book is out of print and the publishing company is no longer in existence. Copies are located in the British Library, the Chester Records Office and at the Family History Centre in Salt Lake City, and I have a photocopy of it. A short precise of the book is available on my website, and a nephew of the author has placed a transcript of much of the book at <http://history.beewarb.org/>.

Around 626AD, Penda defeated Oswy of the kingdom of Northumbria and consolidated Mercia with the river Mersey as the northern border of the kingdom. Subsequently Wolfere became the first Christian king of Mercia. His daughter Werburgh devoted her life to the community, and became Lady President of Weedon and Abbess of Ely. She died in 700AD and was buried at Hanbury near Repton. In 875AD she was canonised and her body was moved to Chester. Queen Ethelfleda (daughter of King Alfred and wife of Ethelred of Mercia) built a monastery in her name. It was situated just west of the Lady Chapel of Chester Cathedral, where St. Werburgh's tomb can still be found.

According to Norman Warburton, in 915AD Ethelfleda, now widowed, was fighting the Danes who were on the Wirral peninsular. She built a series of fortified settlements, one of which was situated by a ford on the river Mersey. This she named after St Werburgh.

However in 2015 **Warburton** edited by Michael Nevell was published by Salford University. This is an archeological and documentary study of the village. It states that the 915AD date is a reference to Waerd Byrig which might be on the Cheshire/Wales border. No archeological evidence has been found for a defended site at Warburton. However the name ending of "-ton" or "-tun" is Saxon and implies a farm enclosed by a ditch, moat or fence. It was also located by a ford which was in use until the Navigation Act of 1721 allowed the the straightening and dredging of the river to allow larger ships to reach a new quay in Manchester. The inhabitants complained that as a result the ford became dangerous and petitioned for a bridge.

The new book also says the village was named either after St Werburgh (also spelt Werberg or Werburghe), or after an early Saxon landholder. The settlement was called Werburghtune in the Domesday Book. In 991AD it paid Dane geld of ten shillings, suggesting a prosperous settlement.

Warburton has two churches named after St Werburgh, one being established in 1885 when the upkeep of the old church became problematical. Nevertheless the old church hashed sufficient restoration and remains in periodic use.

The earliest documentary evidence is of a Priory established in the 12th century, though there is no evidence it had a church. Sections of the original church have been dated to the 13-14th century, but although there is no specific evidence of its earlier existence it may well have existed in Saxon times. It would be unusual for a Norman church to be named after a Saxon saint. My view is that the association of the village church with St Werburgh makes it most likely that the village was named for St Werburgh rather than an unknown landowner, even if there is no specific evidence.

The village of Warburton still exists today, though it is little more than a hamlet, and it is no longer on the banks of the river Mersey which was diverted during the building of the Manchester Ship Canal

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The surname Warburton is therefore a locative surname, i.e. It is derived from a place name. In the 13th and 14th centuries the growth of feudalism and the associated requirement for record keeping was causing the common man to adopt surnames for the first time. A man might use his father's name, the name of a trade, or in the case of locative names, the name of his home or birthplace.

Only one adopter of the Warburton name is known, though the situation is slightly different in that he was not a common man, but lord of the manor. The owners of feudal manors were often identified by the location of their primary residence. Thus when Sir Peter (or Piers) de Dutton built a manor house on his estates at Werberton around 1260 he began to style himself as de (or of) Werberton. Sir Peter was descended from Odard who was granted lands and titles following the Norman Conquest and was known as Lord Odard de Dutton after the village near Runcorn in Cheshire where his principle residence was located. In the 12th century Odard's great grandson Adam de Dutton acquired both halves of the manor at Warburton, but it was only when his great grandson Peter built his manor house that the style de Werberton was adopted.

Two hundred years later the family moved to Arley Hall in Great Budworth, but by this time the Warburton name had stuck. Their descendants still live at Arley Hall today, although the inheritance has twice passed through the female line. The last Warburton of the line (another Peter) died in 1813. The modern spelling of Warburton dates from Elizabethan times.

## The Ancestry of the Duttons

In his book **Warburton: The Village and the Family**, Norman Warburton details the descent of this aristocratic Warburton family from Adam de Dutton, and suggests that all modern Warburtons may be descended from one of its many branches. Locative surnames may well have a single ancestor, but it is probable, particularly in the light of the results from the **Warburton Surname DNA Project** that a number of individuals adopted the Warburton name in the Middle Ages.

The Duttons are descended from Lord Odard de Dutton. Odard's origins are uncertain as the earliest written evidence comes from "Leyester's Historical Antiquities" published in 1673 by Sir Peter Leycester of Tabley. Sir Peter was himself a member of an ancient Cheshire family with links to the Duttons, and he had access to many family records. He states he was denied access to the Warburton records suggesting they were hiding something about their ancestry. In fact access was denied for more parochial reasons. There was a possible dispute between the two families over land known as 'manorial wastes' in Aston and Budworth. The papers in question are now held in the John Rylands Library in Manchester.

There are two big questions over Odard's ancestry. The first is there are two different versions showing descent from William of Eu, who in turn was descended from Rollo, 1st Duke of Normandy.

In pages 248-260 Sir Peter states that:

*The Warburtons claim consanguinity with the ancient blood-royal of England, being descended from Rollo, the first Duke of Normandy, through William, Earl of Eu, who .... married a sister of Hugh Lupus, Earl of Avranches, (afterwards Earl of Chester) named Jeanne, and niece of William the Conqueror. There was issue of this marriage (besides William's successor in the earldom of Eu and another child) six sons, named Nigel, Geffry, Odard or Huddard, Edard, Horswin and Wlofaith. These six brothers accompanied their uncle, Hugh Lupus, into England, in the train of William the Conqueror, their great-uncle; and on the establishment of the Norman power had various estates and honors conferred upon them. Nigel was created Baron of Halton and constable of Cheshire; Geffry was Lord of Stopfort; Odard, Lord of Dutton; Edard, Lord of Haselwell; Horswin, Lord of Shrigley; and Wlofaith, Lord of Halton. Odard, the third son, was the ancestor of the Duttons, now extinct in the male line; the Barons of Chedill, also extinct, and the Warburtons.*

However the following extract from "The History of the City & County Palatine of Chester" by George Ormerod in 1882 states the more common version that:

*WILLIAM FITZ-NIGEL, 2nd Baron of Halton, Constable of Cheshire, was by right of office ranked above all subjects of the Palatinate, next to the Earl of Chester.*

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*With the father of this William, Nigel Fitz-Ivon (1st Baron of Halton) , came five "supposedly brothers" from whom descend the DUTTON'S, Warburton's, Hatton's, and other ancient Cheshire families, and from circumstances of tenure, united to similarity of arms, it appears probable that the LYMME'S and DANIELL'S were also of this noble stock.*

Although this passage is based on Leycester's work it refers to the eldest brother as Nigel Fitz-Ivon, i.e. S on of Ivon, and this ties with Lysons' Magna Britannia, Vol. II. which says that Odard, son of Yvron, viscount of Constantine (Cotentin) ..... was the Immediate ancestor of the ancient and numerous family of Dutton of Dutton. The link to the Dukes of Normandy is maintained in this version because Ivo's wife was Emma de Bretagne, herself the granddaughter of William of Eu.

The second question over Odard's ancestry is that the above are two versions of the ancestry of Nigel the first Baron of Halton, and are only shared by Odard if he is accepted as Nigel's brother. Sir Peter Leicester cast doubt on this, and Ormerod picked up on it with his "supposedly brothers." In his section on the Duttons Leycester said:

*The ancient Roll of the Barons of Halton saith that with Hugh, Earl of Chester, came one Nigell, a nobleman; and with Nigell came five brethren, to wit: Hudard, Edard, Wolmere, Horswyne, and Wolfaith, a Priest, to whom Nigell gave the Church of Runcorne; and unto Hudard, the same Nigell gave Weston and Great Aston, (now divided into two Townships, Aston Grange and Aston juxta Sutton,)....; and from this Hudard came all the Duttons. And in the Record of Doomsday, Odard held Aston under William Fitz-Nigell, Baron of Halton; and also Odard and Brictric held Weston under the said William, Anno Domini 1086. Whether those five Brethren aforementioned, were Brethren to Nigell, is a doubt; for then methinks he should have said Quinque Fratres sui: whereas he says onely, cum isto Nigello Venerunt quinque Fratres, and so names them.*

Modern writers have claimed that Leycester was nit-picking, as why would Nigel mention them at all if they were not kinsmen. Odard also received substantial land and titles suggesting that he not only performed important services, but was from a significant family. An interesting discussion of this issue can be found in **Was Odard, First Lord of Dutton, a Distant Relative of William the Conqueror?** By Edward Dutton, University of Oulu, which can be found at: <http://www.genlit.org/agr/viewarticle.php?id=42>.

Claims of descent from William of Eu may have a hint of family legend. However given Odard's position in the Norman hierarchy in England, it seems extremely likely that Odard was indeed from a significant Norman family, and it as likely this was the Viscounts of Cotentin as any other.

As to the genealogies of the Norman royal and noble families there are several genealogies to be found on the Internet, but I don't know Norman historical sources well enough to judge their accuracy.

I hope that my **Warburton Surname DNA Project** may through more light on this ancestry at some point in the future.

### Warburton Statistics

There are different estimates for the number of Warburtons in the UK. The UK National Health Service Register has 10069 Warburtons in the UK in 2002 (see <http://www.taliesin-arlein.net/names/search.php>). However the British Surnames site (<http://www.britishsurnames.co.uk/surnames/WARBURTON>) has a current number of 7256, while the publicprofiler gbnames site (<http://gbnames.publicprofiler.org/>) has a figure of 7763 in 1998.

The US 2000 census shows there were 2610 Warburtons representing 0.001% of the population, which ranked 11150 in the list of most common names (see [http://www.census.gov/topics/population/genealogy/data/2000\\_surnames.html](http://www.census.gov/topics/population/genealogy/data/2000_surnames.html) and download File B. I am not yet aware of a similar file for the 2010 census). The British Surnames site also has a 1231 Warburtons in Australia, which probably includes Egerton Warburtons.

According to Ancestry.co.uk the number of Warburtons (including some, but not all common incorrect spellings and transcriptions) by UK census were:

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1841 - 4353  
1851 - 5114  
1861 - 5783  
1871 - 6626  
1881 - 7712  
1891 - 8518  
1901 - 9353  
1911 - 9732

### 1851 breakdown:

**Cheshire:** 1085 Warburtons, including 533 males and 209 heads of family were living in Cheshire. Of these 944 Warburtons, including 177 heads of family, were born in Cheshire. 202 Warburtons, including 68 heads of family were born in Cheshire but living elsewhere in the England.

**Lancashire:** 2852 Warburtons, including 1404 males and 533 heads of family were living in Lancashire. Of these 2506 Warburtons, including 436 heads of family, were born in Lancashire. 131 Warburtons, including 40 heads of family were born in Lancashire but living elsewhere in the England.

### 1881 breakdown:

**Cheshire:** 1619 Warburtons, including 762 males and 362 heads of family were living in Cheshire. Of these 1246 Warburtons, including 276 heads of family, were born in Cheshire. 295 Warburtons, including 118 heads of family were born in Cheshire but living elsewhere in England.

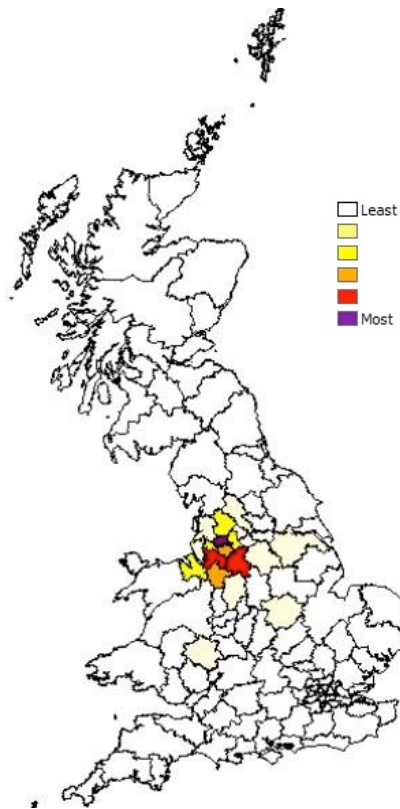
**Lancashire:** 5212 Warburtons, including 2428 males and 1162 heads of family were living in Lancashire. Of these 4607 Warburtons, including 1004 heads of family, were born in Lancashire. 450 Warburtons, including 134 heads of family were born in Lancashire but living elsewhere in England.

### Warburton Distribution

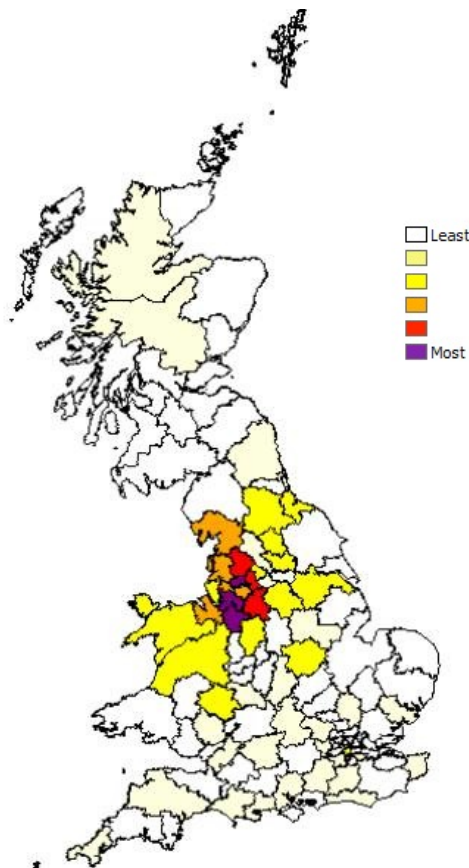
The following maps show the UK distribution of the Warburton name in 1881 and 1998. They were taken from the National Trust Website. The information is now available at the Public Profiler gbnames site (<http://gbnames.publicprofiler.org/>).

The origin of the name on the Cheshire and Lancashire border is clearly indicated.

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WARBURTON DISTRIBUTION (1881)



WARBURTON DISTRIBUTION (1998)

The same site describes the geographical spread of the name. The highest concentration of Warburtons in Great Britain is in Bolton, Lancashire. The highest concentration outside Britain is in

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Australia, with the top state being Western Australia. However it is known that there is a large colony of Egerton Warburtons, a distinct if related family, in Western Australia, particularly around Pallinup which is described as the top standard statistical division. The Egerton Warburtons are descended from the Warburtons of Arley Hall, Cheshire through the female line.

There are also numbers of Warburtons in New Zealand (Marlborough is the top Province), Canada (there are 250 entries in the Canada 411 directory), and the United States (Utah is the top State). Interestingly the concentration in the Republic of Ireland is very low although one of the more interesting and widespread Warburton families has its origins there in the seventeenth century.