

# DOMESDAY BOOK A.D.1086

Jim Whitelock of Plymouth, England has been doing research into the family for several years and has become our expert on the west country families. Jim's recent exploits have turned up material that goes right to heart of the origin of the name. Whitlocks in the Domesday Book!!

The Domesday Book was completed in 1086 and was a survey of the state of the nation since William the Conqueror seized the country in 1066. King Harold, who William defeated in 1066 was not considered the legitimate King by William so is never mentioned. All references are a comparison of the tax value in 1086 to that of 1066 "on the day on which king Edward was alive and dead". The value to the genealogist is the fact the holder of the land in 1066 plus the current holder in 1086 are both listed.

While there do not appear to be Whitlock entries in any of the other Domesday books the Hampshire one has not one but eight! Places mentioned are in present day Hampshire around and in the New Forest plus on the Isle of Wight. The following example is from the Hundred of Bowcombe, West Medire (Isle of Wight):

"Aelfric and Wihtlac hold half a hide in Yafford. It answered for as much before 1066 and now. Four freeholders held it jointly. Land for one plough. In Lordship, half a plough. Five smallholders have one plough. Meadow, half and acre. The value is and was 10 shillings."

(Land was measured by how much could be serviced with one plough)

Aelfric and Wihtlac appear together in several entries and in only two of the eight do they still hold the land in 1086. Several of the entries show the land held by Wihtlac in 1066 has returned to forest by 1086. This seems to show that Wihtlac has made the transition to Norman rule and still retained some of his land. The connection with Aelfric is unclear, although Aelfric is known as "the doctor" in some of the entries.

This information pushes the origin of the Whitlock name back another one hundred years from the first entry in Ewell, Surrey circa 1180. It also shows the name's anglo-saxon beginnings as Wihtlac was obviously there before the norman conquest. Jim is now working on the connection between the Priory of Merton at Ewell, Surrey and Hampshire as there is some connection indicated.

SOURCE: X514