

# THE FAMILY OF PHILLIMORE

## The Surname, its Spelling

PHILLIMORE is a surname which is, as now spelt, comparatively speaking, of modern origin, for the first instance of it that so far has been met with does not date back beyond the earlier years of the seventeenth century. It belongs to a group of surnames which are remarkable for their mutability of form and for the manner in which the spelling varies. With perhaps the majority of surnames, certainly so with those which are monosyllabic, the variations of spelling are usually insignificant, and do not materially affect the form of the name. Thus Smith may be spelt Smyth, or a final *e* may be added, or even as Smijth, but the name still remains unmistakably Smith. Not so with the group of surnames with which we are now concerned. The number of letters employed may range from six, as in Filmer, to ten in Finnimore or Phillimore, or even eleven as in Phillemoore; while it is remarkable that in all the numerous varieties of spelling there are but two letters which will be found throughout to be constant and invariable. These are the *m* and the *r*. All others, whether vowel or consonant, seem to perpetually vary, and in fact it is impossible to point to any particular spelling, either ancient or modern, and to claim that in it we find the true and original form of the name.

The variations of spelling which have been noted number very nearly one hundred and fifty, though they may be classified in a few distinct divisions depending upon the initial letter used, the termination, whether in *n* or *l* of the first syllable, and the suppression or use of a middle vowel converting the name into a dissyllable or a trisyllable. By minor changes, such as the suppression of the final *e*, the use of *y* for *i*, or *ou*, *u*, *e* and *a* for *o* or *oo*, or the doubling of *n* and *l*, the variant forms are much increased in number.

The initial may be *F*, which, as might be expected, comprises by far the greater number of examples, viz., 298, or its literary equivalent *Ph* with 60 instances; *P* with 24 instances, *B* with 33, and *V* with but 19. Thus:

F	298}
Ph <sup>1</sup>	60} = 358
V	19
P	24
B	33

The list on page 2 of upwards of one hundred and fifty variant forms of this family of surnames shows their great variety, and illustrates the difficulty there may be, especially in the earlier periods, in tracing the history of any family bearing one of these surnames. The majority of the forms are obsolete, and some few are clearly nothing more than the mis-spellings of illiterate people. About 40 only, or less than a third, can be regarded as existing names, and even of these, which in the list are given in capital letters, some are probably but accidental mis-spellings and do not represent distinct families. In this list the figures attached to each name indicate the times of occurrence in the indexes to births in the Registrar-General's office in England for the period 1877-81: -

CLASSIFIED TABLE OF VARIANTS.

FENEMORE, 36	Fynamour	M'Phillimore	Finmoore
FENIMORE, 2	Fynamur	Phillymore	Finnmoore
Fenimoore	Fynnamoore	Philemoor	Fynmour
Fenymoure	Fynnamore	Phillemoore	
Fenymore	Fynnemore	Philmoor	BINMORE, 18
FENNEYMORE, 1	Fynnemoore	Phillomoar	Bynmore
FENNYMORE, 5	Fynnimore	Phillimar	BENMORE, 4
Fennymor	Fjnnymore	Phylmoor	Pinmoore
Fennemer	Fynymour	Philomer	VENMORE, 4
Fennemere	Finemer		
Fennimor	Finemere	Pillimore	FELMER, 1
Fennymare	Fynemere		Felmore
Phenemore	Phinamore	BILLAMORE	Fellmore
Phenimore	Phinnamore	BILLIMORE, 3	FILMORE, 8
Phennemere	Phinemore	Billemore	FILLMORE, 7
	Phinnemore	Billamer	Fylmore
FINAMORE, 6	Phinimore	Billemer	Fillmore
Finamour	Phinnimore	Billimar	Filmour
Finamur	Phynimore	Billimor	Filmoore
FINNAMORE, 12	Phynnimore		Filmor
Finemor		BELLAMORE, 2	PHILMORE, 10
FINEMORE, 10	VENEMORE, 7	Bellamour	PHILLMORE, 2
FINNEMORE, 50	VENIMORE, 7	BELEMORE, 3	FILMER, 105
FINNEYMORE, 2	VENNEMORE, 1	Belemer	Fillmer
FINNEMOR	Vennimore	Bellamor	Fillemer
FINIMORE, 3			Fylmer
Finymore		Pennymore	Fylmere
Finnymore	Felymore	Bennamore	Philmer
Fynamore	Fillamor	Bennemore	Vilmore
Finnamoore	Fillamore		
Finnamure	Filimore	Fenmore	PILMER, 8
Fynamour	Fillimore	Finmare	PILMORE, 3
Fynamoure	Filyemore	Fynmer	PILLMORE, 4
Finemour	Fyllimore	Fynmere	PILMOOR, 7
Fynemer	Fylymore	FINMORE, 3	PILMOORE, 1
	Fillimoore	Finnmore	PILMOUR, 1
Fynemere	Fillymore	Fynmore	Pilmor
Fynemore	Philamore	Finmer	Pilmure
Fynnemore	Phillamore		
Fynemor	PHILEMORE, 1	FYNMORE, 2	BELMER, 1
Fynemour	PHILLEMORE	Phinmore	BELMORE, 1
Fynimore	PHILIMORE, 1	Phynnmore	Bellmore, 1
Fynymore	PHILLIMORE, 58		
Fynamore			

The principal families, with approximately their areas of distribution, are as follows: -

Fenemore and Fennemore, etc.,	<i>Oxfordshire</i>	59 instances
Finamore and Finnamore,	<i>Devonshire, Ireland, and Italy</i>	18
Finemore and Finnemore, etc.,	<i>Devonshire and Ireland</i>	60
Finimore and Finnimore;	<i>Devonshire and Ireland</i>	34
Venemore and Vennemore, etc.,	<i>Oxfordshire</i>	15
Fynmore, etc	<i>Berkshire</i>	5
Phillimore, etc	<i>Gloucestershire, Hampshire, and Wiltshire</i>	60
Billimore,	<i>Berkshire</i>	3
Filmore and Philmore,	<i>Devonshire</i>	18
Fillmore and Phillmore,	<i>Devonshire and U.S.A</i>	9
Filmer,	<i>Kent</i>	105
Pilmoor, etc. <sup>2</sup>		16
Belmor, etc		3
Bellamore, etc.		5
Binmore and Benmore	<i>Berkshire</i>	22
Venmore		4

It may be asked what evidence there is for the assumption that these various surnames are interchangeable forms. To show this it will be requisite merely to give a few instances.

Dealing first with Gloucestershire families, we find, in the fifteenth century, William Fylymore living at Dursley in 1465, who appears to have made his will in 1492 as William Fynmore, while his widow, Isabel, in 1508 made hers as Isabella Fynnmore. Their son was John Fynamore of Cam; and their grandson, described as William Fynimore in 1577, made his own will in 1590 as William Phinimore. Yet he is spoken of as William Fyllmore of Cam, in 1546, in the will of his cousin, Henry Fylymore of Wickwar, which same document, now in the Gloucester Probate Registry, is endorsed as the will of Henry Fynmore of Wickwar. In the parish registers of Cam the forms Phinimore and Phillimore are used interchangeably until about 1680, when Phinimore appeared there for the last time, though the family themselves seem some time before to have settled down permanently to the form Phillimore. As a matter of fact, in the Cam registers the spelling of the name in the seventeenth century varied with the different vicars. On the same page we find the churchwarden in 1663 described as Danyell Phillimore and as Daniel Phinimore. In 1678, Daniel Phinnimore of Coaley, a village adjoining Cam, names in his will his son Daniel Phillimore. His widow Joan, in her will in 1685 throughout uses the spelling Phinnimore.

The manor rolls of Cam also illustrate the variable nature of the name. Thus: -

1515. J. Fynamore	1607. R. Phenimore	1614. R. Fillimore
1521. T. Fynmore	1610. R. Phynimore	1665. J. Phil]imore
1560. W. Fynimore	“ G. Philiyore	“ W. Phynmore
1568. W. Finimore	1613. J. Philimore	1666. W. Fillimore
1580. W. Fynnmore	“ J. Phillimore	1677. R. Fillimore
1601. R. Phinimore		

In these records 1601 is the earliest date at which we find the initial *Ph*, as in Phinimore, and 1613 the first for the *l* form of Phillimore. The *n* form does not appear after 1665, and the latest for the initial *F* is 1677. After that date Phillimore is the usual, if not the invariable, form for this family.

In Wiltshire and Hampshire there are families of Phillimore unconnected, so far as they have been traced, with those of Gloucestershire. At Netheravon in Wilts, in 1731-2, Phineas Philamore *alias* Fennimore was party to a conveyance which he signed as Phillomoar, while his name is entered in the parish register as Phillamore, the spelling commonly adopted there in the seventeenth century, though the family is now known as Phillimore.

The Hampshire Directory for the year 1859 supplies the following forms: -

Filmore	Billimore	Philemore
Fillmore	Phillemore	Fennemore

The Fynmores of Berkshire, who descend from William Fynmore, mayor of Reading in 1577 and 1586, exhibit similar variations of spelling. The mayor himself seems to have been buried as "Mr. Filmer" in 1593, and his wife under the same surname in 1603. The churchwardens' accounts of St. Laurence, Reading, in 1550-53, furnish the forms Fynmore, Fenymore and Fenemore, while in 1606-9 Humphrey Fynmore, evidently the son of the Mayor, is also mentioned as Fylmore and Filmore. The tablets in North Hinksey Church, dated 1677 and 1687, which record later members of this family, who were persons of position and education, have Fynmore and Finmore; and in 1707, the widow of Archdeacon Fynmore was buried in Chester Cathedral as Finnemore. The Berkshire probate records supply us with further instances. In 1553 we find the will of Robert Fenymore or Fynmore of East Hendred, and in 1603 Adam Finemore or Finmore of Kingston Lisle. Thomas Fynemore was of East Hendred in 1459, when he obtained a lease of the tithes of that place from the Prior of Wallingford. In 1606 is the will of Richard Filmore *alias* Fynmore of Long Wittenham. It was witnessed by William Finmore, and proved by his son, Thomas Fynimore.

Henry Filmer, churchwarden of Windsor, who was burnt there for heresy about 1543, is variously described in the earlier editions of Foxe's Book of Martyrs as Finmore, Finnemore, and Filmer.

In Oxfordshire, at North Stoke, the will of Philip Philmore was proved in 1636 by his widow, who described herself and her husband as Phinmore *alias* Philmore. Yet, in 1660, their daughter took out letters of administration "de bonis non" to her father as Philmer.

Similar changes of spelling are exhibited by the Kentish family of Filmer. As long ago as 1741, the variations were noticed by Nichols in his Baronetage, who stated on the authority of the then Sir Edmund Filmer, that "this family formerly wrote their name Finmere, <sup>3</sup> Fylmere, Filmour and Filmore, *temp.* Edward III, but of late Filmer, and were seated at Otterinden in Kent, at a place called Finmore." There does not seem to be any such place as Finmore in Otterden, but the deeds of this family indicate that the farm which they held in that parish was once known as "Finmore's", after their own name. Doubtless they themselves, as we shall see hereafter, took their name from the Oxfordshire Finmere.

The parish register of Wandsworth, in Surrey, gives, in the years 1626 to 1634, five entries relating to the family of Edmund Fynimore. His name is spelt in three different ways - Fynimore, Phinamore, and Phinimore. Four other entries relating to another person appear in as many different spellings, viz., Filmore, Fillmore, Felmore and Fellmore.

The register of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, London, exhibits several instances of these surnames, which are worth noting as occurring in the same register, though seemingly not connected with each other.

1617. Anne Phillimore	1713. Rachel Phinnamore
1660. Mary Filmore	1734. Elizabeth Fennimore

This tendency to change is not yet extinct, though, of course, less prevalent than anciently was the case. Thus a Bedfordshire family now known as Phillimore adopted that spelling in the early part of the nineteenth century, while their near kindred continued to use the spelling of Fenimore.

Many other instances, were it necessary, might easily be adduced in proof of the phonetic identity of these various surnames, and it is only necessary to add that personal experience at the present day shows that people to whom the names are not familiar have often difficulty in distinguishing between them, and will spell Phillimore as Finnimore or Finimore.

1. The use of the symbol Ph. for F is a mere literary fancy, arising doubtless from the classic renaissance in the latter part of the sixteenth century. It is found both in Gloucestershire and Devonshire, but while in the former county its use has become permanent, in the latter it seems to be obsolete. For its use in other names we may compare Phillingham and Fillingham, Phillpot and Fillpot, Phear and Fear, Phynch and Finch. An analogous practice not uncommon in Gloucestershire in the seventeenth century is the spelling of Cham for Cam.
2. Although etymologically it is quite possible that the names in the last five groups are connected with the remainder in this list, no documentary evidence in support of their identity has been so far noted. Indeed, the fact that in Berwickshire, as well as in Yorkshire, there are places called Pilmore, while we find the surname Pilmore chiefly in the North of England and in Forfarshire rather militates against the theory as regards that form.
3. The Dartford registers give the following: - "John Finnimore married Margaret Wra'rgame 14 June 1562." "John Fynnymore married Margaret Boughton 10 November 1563."