

YOU COULD HAVE BEEN A HILL!

The Introduction from Kaye (How) Wachter's book

The name How (no 'e') is a very old name and, simply put, means hill. On old English walking maps, you may see small hills identified by the word/name of how or xxxhow.

In 1579 the first How name appeared in the Hadlow [Kent] parish* records when Katherine Pery married Abraham How. This was some years before the keeping of records was required. Oliver Cromwell was the ruler [1649-1658] who decreed that records should be kept and since only the church had the organization to do so, the parishes recorded birth, death and marriage records.

A parish is the area within the boundaries of the jurisdiction of a church. There was one for each hamlet or village. As villages grew, churches and parishes multiplied. As settlements died, churches and their parishes became empty. The Church has had a long association with English rulers. The Church of England is, of course, a break away from Rome. Churches have been invited to lend or donate their old parish records to the county archive library where "they will be better kept". Most have but not all.

In the 1830's the English government began issuing the birth, death and marriage certificates. Copies of these are kept at the General Register Office, P.O. Box 2, Southport, Merseyside, PR8 2JD. The e-mail address is: certificate.servicesons.gov.uk. In the United States, records are filed with the recorder's office at the county courthouse within the state in which the birth, death or marriage occurred. In some states they may also be filed at the state capital's courthouse.

Amongst the English Hows we find farmers, a watchmaker, a traveling salesman, accountants, carpenters and craftsmen, businesspersons, teachers, artists, computer specialists, engineers and bankers. Some have fought in war or served with the military or in the National Service.

Amongst the American Hows we find a rail man [the cutting edge of technology at that time], farmers, a traveling salesman, accountants, carpenter, an innkeeper, businesspersons, teachers, artists, computer specialists, engineers and members of the medical profession. Some have gone to war; others have served in the military or National Guard.

Norman A. How, living in London and a grandson to Thomas Waldo How, is the genealogical researcher credited with compiling the English family history — all the way back to 1579. Norman is a member of the Society of Genealogists in the U.K.

Kaye [How] Wachter, living in California and a granddaughter to Samuel Francis Stephen [Frank] How, has had the enjoyment of combining the data, the stories, the photos and images that have come in from many different sources. This project began rather extemporaneously but soon began to take shape as a means to show us where we came from, where we are now and where we are going. It was, indeed, a true labor of love.

Many thanks to all of you, but most especially to Mary [How] Wickes who supplied so much of the English side of the story. Also from Eleanor [Nell] How came the wonderful Thomas Waldo How family photo c. 1895 [the only photo of that family to come to light], and it became the heart of the story. All of us "Hows" have descended from one of the three brothers in that picture.

*Editors Note: Parishes generally acquire their names from the largest town or village in the area.