

Colin Attfield's appeal for family lineage information, 1956

Sir, I am trying to carry on, and bring up to date, a table of the Attfield genealogy first started by John of Watford in 1889.

Please contribute any information you may possess or can obtain. He had evidence of Attfields living in England in the 12th century (Solomon, Kent), the 13th century (John, Warwickshire) and the 14th century (John, Hertfordshire). Going backwards, he readily connects several Attfields, then living, with an Attfield of 1722, as shown in the above table. Kindly help me to widen and complete the lineage of all the male Attfields of recent generations, and to carry that lineage back as far as possible. The task should be comparatively easy for, judging by the present rarity of the name, Attfields have always been few in number. At all events the work will be greatly facilitated if you yourself will give me, and will ask any other Attfields you may know to give me, the Christian name, place of residence, and dates of birth and death, or either of these four data, respecting any male ancestors – whether fathers, father's brothers, grandfather or their brothers, and so on – as obtained from old deeds or other writings, old book covers, parish or other official registers, family tradition, etc. Inscriptions on Attfield tombstones might be sought in districts where Attfields reside or have resided. If copies of any such data were forwarded to me I would fit together the links from the different sources and would present resulting extended and widened editions of my Lineage Table to every Attfield thus helping me. The families of all civilized nations, in all times, have in this way maintained the framework of their collective history: for "union is strength", morally as well as maternally. I will gladly incur what little trouble may be involved, and also any little cost for printing and distributing, if the other Attfields will do their best to help me in any of the ways just mentioned. Even a single name, residence or date, or a single piece of information as to the exact number of sons or brothers of any Attfield, may be valuable as a link, and will be welcomed; though of course a collection of names, etc, or a family table such as the above, will be still more welcome. In short, I beg every Attfield now living, or any friend, to send me any and all obtainable information. I should also be glad to receive short notices of any Attfield who occupied any public position or obtained any academic or other distinction.

Yours faithfully
Colin Attfield
Hoddesdon, Herts
September 15, 1956

NOTE:

The above appeal was appended to the Attfield family tree which was compiled and circulated by Colin Attfield in 1956 to as many Attfields as he could identify.

It is of particular interest today for several reasons. Firstly it indicates the provenance of the Attfield tree, secondly it provides some information on the name's early origins, and thirdly it offers an insight into the genealogical research techniques and sources of those pre-internet times.

"John of Watford" was of course Professor John Attfield (1835-1911), who himself, as indicated elsewhere on this site, was certainly the most eminent member of this particular Attfield line. It would be of great interest to know if any of his genealogical research materials have survived.