



By the Boke

An educational series of articles presented by the Northshield College of Heraldry.

Aryanhwy merch Catmael, Boke Herawde, divides her time between Wales in the 11th century and London in the 14th. Sara L. Uckelman is a Ph.D. student in philosophy at UW-Madison.

How to Write a Summary for Submitting Your Name to the College of Arms

By Aryanhwy merch Catmael, Boke Herawde

I. What this article is not

This article is not a how-to document your name article (though I'm writing that one in the near future). This article assumes that you already have suitable documentation, and are ready to submit your name to the College of Arms for comment.

II. Why a summary?

Admin Handbook V.B.2.d says "Summary of Supporting Evidence - A summary of all supporting evidence provided for the submission must be included on the letter of intent. Such evidence includes documentation, permissions to conflict, proofs for entitlement, statements of support for transferred items, and evidence for support in the case of branch submissions. In the case of resubmissions or appeals, a history of previous submissions to the College of Arms, including the dates and grounds for previous returns must be included. Where possible, the letter should include specific references (including page numbers) to all supporting documentation. Omission of this documentation may make registration impossible." Furthermore IV.A says "The submitter bears the primary responsibility for meeting procedural requirement," which means that the summary is ultimately the responsibility of the submitter, and not the submissions herald.

If a summary of the documentation is not submitted, then the Laurel Sovereign of Arms may return your submission, because without a summary, the College of Arms cannot adequately comment on the submission, to determine whether it is historical, registerable, and conflict free.

III. What needs documentation?

All elements of a submitted name need to be documented. This means not just the individual elements (e.g. *Aryanhwy*, *merch*, and *Catmael*), but also the overall construction (<given name> + 'daughter' + <father's name>), as well as any non-standard elements or constructions that are being used.

IV. What should my summary look like?

Each part of a name must have supporting documentation showing that it was either used historically or has been ruled acceptable by the College of Arms. Evidence of historical use includes dated citations; if you don't have a date, you don't have documentation. Generally, evidence of historical use is found either in books or on webpages. Your summary must include citations all these sources; this means title, author, edition (if relevant), and either page number or header name. If the book you use has names arranged alphabetically by header names, including the header name is a must, since it is not always obvious, and page numbers do not narrow down the citation specifically enough. Furthermore, page numbers change with editions; header names generally don't. Since you can never be sure that another person is using the same edition

that you do, you must include the header name, if the book is so arranged.

The summary can follow the basic format of "Name is found in Author's Book or "Web Page", dated to date as a given name/surname/nickname." If your source is a webpage, give the full URL. It is often helpful to include a quote from the source, if applicable, instead of just listing a date. If you have documented a descriptive nickname, you should include the meaning of the nickname (if one is listed).

Let's take an easy example: John le Smyth. A summary of documentation for this name might look like this:

John is found in Withycombe's *Oxford Dictionary of English Christian*, 3rd ed., s.n. John. Withycombe says that *John* was a fairly common English name in the 12th-15th C."

le Smyth is found in Reaney & Wilson's *Dictionary of English Surnames*, 3rd ed., s.n. Smith, dated to 1275 in the entry <William le Smyth>.

And now another one: Generys verch Morydic.

All elements are found in Tangwystyl verch Morgant Glasvryn's "A Simple Guide to Constructing 13th C Welsh Names" (<http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/tangwystyl/welsh13.html>), accessed 08Jan04.

Generys is a feminine given name.

Morydic is a masculine given name.

Under the section "Bynames based on relationships," it says: "For the most common type of byname — one indicating relationship — the name is set up as follows: <given name> <relationship word> <relative's given name>" and "In this document, Latin *filia* is the only word found for this, although Welsh *verch* can be found in documents of a similar period."

And the last example: Failtigern de Farewei.

Failtigern is a masculine name found in O'Corrain & Maguire's *Irish Names* s.n. Failtigern, where they say "the only bearer of this name known to me is St. Failtigern whose feast-day is 17 March."

Farewei is a place name found in Mills' *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, s.n. Farway, dated to the 1086 Domesday book.

de is a Latin preposition 'of', appropriate with <Farewei> since <Farewei> is from a Latin document.

Names combining English & Gaelic were ruled a weirdness by Laurel on the 10/1999 LoAR. Since this is the only weirdness, the name is registerable.

Names that are only documentable as saint's names are registerable, per precedent from 09/2001 which says in part, "So, in summary, given names which can be documented as the given name of a saint may be registered as a given name."

A note: If your dated citation includes the entire name, as <William le Smyth> does, then it is not necessary to specify what part of the name the element you're documenting is, as it is obvious from the context.

V. Summarizing non-historical elements

Not all name elements are documented by showing that they are historically compatible. Some names which are not historic but extremely popular in the SCA have been ruled "SCA-Compatible." If you use a SCA-Compatible element in your name, an adequate summary would give the date when the name was ruled SCA-Compatible. If you are using an element of your modern legal name, the summary needs to say how you are proving this is part of your legal name (e.g., driver's license, birth certificate, marriage license) and what part of your name the element is (e.g. first name, middle name, last name).

Also, sometimes a name may be submitted that is not explicitly documented, but has been formed in parallel with documented examples of other names. (My given name, in fact, falls into this category). When you document a name in this fashion, be detailed in your summary about not just what the parallel examples are, but why they are parallel.

VI. What is not a good summary

Before moving to some concluding remarks, I want to give examples of bad summaries:

Wendy is found in Withycombe.

This is not an adequate summary because it leaves out dates and details of where in the book the name is found. In fact, Withycombe says that *Wendy* was "first used by J.M. Barrie in his play *Peter Pan* (1904)," which means that barring other evidence, this name not is suitable for SCA registration.

Maoilruanaidh

<http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/mari/AnnalsIndex/Masculine/>

This is an inadequate summary for a number of reasons: The title and the author of the article are not mentioned. The type of name element is not mentioned (whether it is a byname, given name, etc.). And most importantly, no evidence is given that this name was used before 1600 or is otherwise appropriate for SCA name registration. *Even though* the name is in fact dated to 1322, 1455, 1473, and 1590 as a masculine Irish Gaelic given name, and even though the appropriate photocopies of the documentation might be included with the submission, if the above is all the summary that is included, the submission could be returned.

VII. Concluding remarks

Lastly, if you have any questions about how to find documentation, how to fill out the submissions forms, how many photocopies to make, or anything like that, don't hesitate to contact your local or regional herald, or email the Northshield College of Heraldry list at ns-heralds@mailman.itasca.net.