



Interesting Facts About **American Surnames**

Since Europeans had settled in North America during colonization, many American surnames have originated in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.



Many surnames were lost when owners of people who were brought from Africa into the US for slavery took away their subjects' first and last names.

After slavery ended, the people who were enslaved chose new last names since the original ones were forgotten.



Some people took the names of their owners as their surnames, while others were inspired by the important people in history.

Some people in the US choose a different surname rather than a traditional one to highlight their beliefs and personalities.



In the US, the tradition for women was to take their husband's surname after marriage. However, a few women in history went against the tide.

The first woman who did not take up her husband's surname was Lucy Stone, who married in 1855, an advocate of antislavery and women's rights.



References



1. Making a Name: Women's Surnames at Marriage and Beyond; Journal of Economic Perspectives; Scholars at Harvard
2. Where Do Last Names Come From?; Wonderopolis; National Center for Families Learning
3. Lesson 1: How Did Surnames Come to Be?; Edsitement; National Endowment for the Humanities