

Andover Moves West

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AS THE PEOPLE WENT WEST, they took the old names along, just as their ancestors had brought them from England. . . ." writes George R. Stewart in *Names on the Land*. This is not a new dictum, yet no study has been made, to my knowledge, which traces a place name or a group of place names across the Atlantic and westward through the United States. Such an investigation should be of interest not only to the student of names but also to the geographer and the historian, since place names are markers of cultural affiliations.

As an example of a migrating name I chose Andover because I knew it to occur in a number of states. It proved to be a good choice: there is only one Andover in England, and this town in Hampshire therefore can *a priori* be assumed to be the point of origin. Andover, old forms are *Andeferas*, *Andeferan*, and *Andovere*, comes, according to Ekwall's *Dictionary of English Place-Names*, from an old name of the river Anton, and contains the river name *Ann* and a derivative of Brit. *dubro-*, meaning "water or river."

A number of families came from this Andover in Hampshire to the recently founded Massachusetts Bay Colony. They bought some land from the Indians in 1643 and built a settlement. The General Court of Massachusetts, in 1646, confirmed the purchase and the name of the settlement, Andover. The family names of some of these pioneers still occur in both towns, on either side of the Atlantic (e.g.: Abbot, Chandler, Holt, Stevens, Russel, and Poor).¹ This Massachusetts town bore an offspring just over the border in Connecticut, where an Andover was settled in 1718.

A hematite mine and forge, which later supplied the Revolutionary armies, were built in New Jersey in 1760 and named Andover by the miners. The townsite and the mine were part of a tract obtained by the furnace builders from William Penn's heirs.

Since no connection could be established with the two then existing Andovers in New England and since the only information available² points to an old England origin of the name, we might assume that the name here was brought anew across the Atlantic.

In 1761, Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire granted a charter to still another Andover. When the state boundaries were drawn in their final form, this town came to be in Vermont. The only information on the background of the naming of this place is Gannett's statement³ that it is named after the town in England. Unfortunately, Gannett's pioneering volume on place names is notorious for its inaccuracies. He is particularly prone to jump to conclusions without further investigation; he has the town name Milton, for instance, in several cases given for the poet John Milton, where upon closer scrutiny it turns out to be given for a mill or some other person by that name (see Miltons in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and West Virginia). With this in mind and the historical fact that much of the population of Vermont had come from the seaboard, we are probably justified in assuming that Andover, Vermont, was named for the one in Massachusetts.

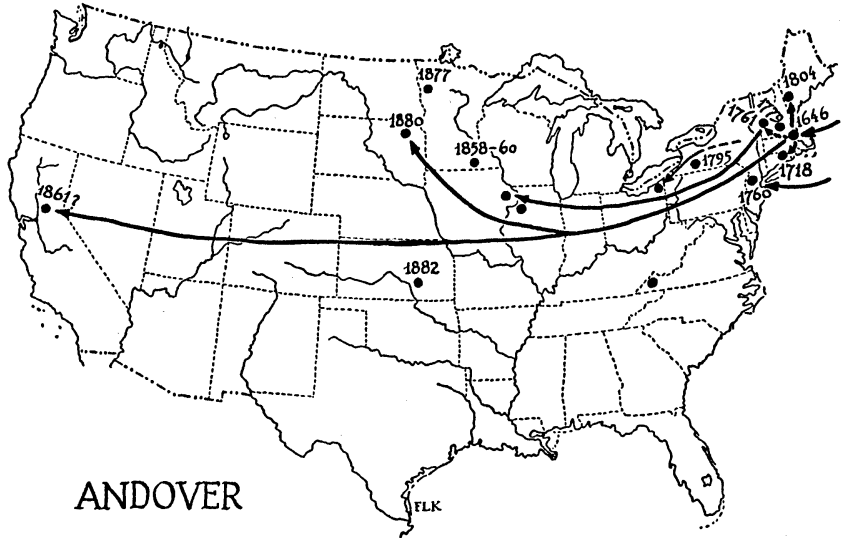
New Hampshire, in its final form, got an Andover also. The town was originally called Emerisstown, then in 1746 it was granted as New Britton, and finally in 1779 was incorporated as Andover. But no record about the origin of the name in this case could be found. In view of the date—in the midst of the struggle for independence—there seems to be little doubt that the name was given for the neighbor in Massachusetts, rather than for the remote, in space as well as now in sentiment, town in old England.⁴

Andover, New York, dates from ca. 1795, when several families from Pennsylvania made their home here. There is no Andover in Pennsylvania. Among the first settlers however was one N. Dyke, who originally came from Connecticut and who had been a student at Yale.⁵ He was undoubtedly familiar with Andover, Mass., and Andover, Conn., and he may well be the key figure in the naming of the New York town.

The best that could be found for Andover, Ohio, is the following statement by M. E. Martin:⁶ "The names of the towns in the Reserve show a decided remembrance of the settlers' early homes; as West Andover . . ., while other characteristic New England names show Yankee colonies all over the State. . . ."

Three more Andovers can be traced to the Massachusetts town: A number of families from that town purchased land in Maine in 1791 and thirteen years later named East Andover. By 1821 this had been shortened to Andover.

Andover, South Dakota, also is a nominal descendant of the Massachusetts place. In addition to this information Ehrensperger⁷ records a local story about the naming of the town: After building the line through the rugged Coteau Hills, the railroad workers were much relieved when they reached the open plains, whereupon



one of them, a worker presumably of foreign descent, exclaimed "End Over." "Later, the story adds, the words were combined and the 'E' changed to 'A.'" This place was originally known as Station 88 and remained when the site was platted in 1880 or 1881.

Andover, Placer County, California, was named by a division superintendent of the Southern Pacific railroad after his home town in Massachusetts,⁸ presumably ca. 1861 when this line was built.

Andover, Iowa, was named by C. C. Wheeler of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway Company for the town in Vermont. Minnesota has an Andover township which was organized in 1877. Upham⁹ seems to think of a New England origin: he states that the township "has a name that is borne by townships and villages in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and ten other states." Be-

tween 1858 and 1860 there was an Andover in southern Minnesota, which however was later re-named Bennington, after Bennington, Vermont.

The name of the hamlet Cloud City, Kansas, was changed, in 1882, to Andover, by Charles and Jane Glancey.¹⁰ There are Andovers in Virginia and Illinois also.

The fate of Andover and of many other names indicates that, contrary to common belief, the majority of U.S. town names which are also found in England are not direct transfers across the Atlantic. Once an English name is transferred to America it becomes an American name. Settlers, moving West, named their settlements after their home towns in New England and they might conceivably have been unaware of the existence of the name in old England. Andover provides an excellent example of a name established in the East and carried westward as part of the cultural heritage of the people.

NOTES

¹ A. Forbes, *Towns of New England and Old England*, New York, 1921. A. Abbot, *History of Andover, Massachusetts, Andover, Mass.*, 1829.

² Fed. Writers Program, *The Origin of New Jersey Place Names*, 1939. Am. Guide Series, *New Jersey*, New York, 1939.

³ Henry Gannett, *The Origin of Certain Place Names in the United States*, U.S.G.S. Bull. no. 258, 1905.

⁴ Investigation of similar names (Winchester, Alton, Portsmouth, Southampton) leads me to conclude that all naming after English towns took place before the Revolution.

⁵ J. H. French, *Gazetteer of the State of New York*, Syracuse, N.Y., 1860.

⁶ M. E. Martin, "Origin of Ohio Place Names," *Ohio Archeol. Hist. Quart.*, July 1905.

⁷ *South Dakota Place Names*, Ehrensperger, Ed., Vermillion, S. Dak., 1941.

⁸ E. G. Gudde, *California Place Names*, Berkeley, Calif., 1949.

⁹ Warren Upham, "Minnesota Geographic Names," *Coll. Minn. Hist. Soc.*, vol. 17, 1920.

¹⁰ Personal communication from Elisabeth Belford, Andover, Kansas.