

The Domesday Book



In the year 1085, William I (aka William the Conqueror) sent agents to every shire in England for the purpose of evaluating all holdings so he might calculate the dues owed to him. In this way, William could determine what taxes had been owed during the reign of King Edward the Confessor, allowing him to reassert the rights of the Crown and assess where power lay after a wholesale redistribution of land following the Norman Conquest.

The survey was completed in 1086 and its findings were recorded into what has become known as “the Domesday” Book, using the Middle English spelling of “Doomsday.” It was so called because, much like the Final Judgement, its findings were fixed and would broach no appeal or amendment.

Within its pages is listed the manor of Shelvock, located near Shrewsbury, Shropshire, England. At the time of the Domesday Book, the manor was owned by Odo, under Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury. While possession changed hands a few times over the centuries, it has become most closely linked to the Thornes whom took ownership in the 1400s and held onto it for the next two centuries.

Roger “The Wise” Thornes, thus named because his advice and counsel was often sought by the citizenry, served as alderman, burgess, bailiff and coroner of Shrewsbury. He is a 13th great-grandfather to my sons.

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