

THE BRECK FAMILY AND NAME IN GREAT BRITAIN.

In a roll of the inhabitants of West Derby, in Lancashire, England, A. D. 1323, are the names of Robert del Brek and his son Thomas, who were paying rent to the Earl of Lancaster. In 1325 Thomas del Breck paid 2^d. at Liverpool for default in the great court.* The same names, Robert and Thomas Breck, appear both in Lancashire and America 300 to 400 years later. West Derby was directly west of Liverpool, but most of it has been annexed to that city in recent years. Although Breck is no longer known as a family name in and around Liverpool, a recent map discloses the names of Breck House, Breck Road, Breck Side Park, Breckfield Road and Walton Breck Road, and there is a Breck Road station on a branch of the L. & N. W. Ry.

Hugh Breck of Rainford, a little hamlet a dozen miles north-east of Liverpool, died in 1591, leaving four children, Robert, Henry, Edmond and Margett. The marriage of a Thomas Breck in July, 1582, is recorded in Prescott, the parish in which Rainford was then located. During the following century the name appears in Runcorn, now a busy port just across the Mersey in Cheshire, about twelve miles south-east of Liverpool. Thomas Breck, yeoman, died there in 1632, Richard in 1633, Thomas in 1678, Samuel in 1685, and still another Thomas in 1687. Charles Nickson, in his history of Runcorn (London, 1887), refers to a Rev. Thomas Breck who was vicar of the parish, All Saints, during the few years preceding 1652.

The proximity of southern Lancashire to Wales and the place name of Brecknock, borne by a county, a borough and two rugged mountain peaks in Wales, have suggested that the name might be of Welsh origin. There certainly is a Welsh word *brech*, meaning freckled or speckled, and many surnames have come from personal marks. There is evidently a similar word in Gaelic Scotch, for Bracklinn (see Scott's *Lady of the Lake*) means speckled pool. In Dumfriesshire, Scotland, is a ridge called Breckonhill, and in the far off Shetland Islands *breck* is a common place name, usually applied to steep, rocky estates. Two similar names, Brock and Brett, are said to be of Welsh origin.

No connection has as yet been established between the English Brecks and the American Brecks.

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