Origin of notary, the true History by Richard Smith

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In the civil institutions of ancient Rome the origin of Notary has its roots. Public officials, called scribes, rose in rank from being mere copiers and transcribers to a learned profession prominent in private and public affairs. In the last century of the Republic, a new form of shorthand was invented and called "notae", were substituted for words in common use. A writer who adopted the new method was called a "notarius". Originally, a public notary was one who took down statements in shorthand and wrote them out in the form of memoranda or minutes. Later, the title "notarius" was applied almost exclusively to registrarâ€™s high government officials, including provincial governors and secretaries to the Emperor.

After the fall down of the Western Empire in the 5th century AD, the notary remained a figure of some importance in many parts of continental Europe throughout the Dark Ages. When the civil law experienced its renaissance in the 12th century, the notary was established as a central institution of that law. At first, notaries in England were appointed by the Papal Legate. In 1279 the Archbishop of Canterbury was authorized by the Pope to appoint notaries. Many of the notaries were members of the clergy. In the course of time, members of the clergy ceased to take part in secular business and laymen, especially in towns and trading centers, began to assume the official character and functions of a modern public notary.

In the US a Notary Public is an official of integrity appointed by state government to serve the public as an impartial witness in performing a variety of official fraud-deterrent acts related to the signing of important documents. These official acts are called notarizations or notarial acts. Notaries are expected to follow written rules without the exercise of significant personal discretion.

It is the primary duty of a Notary to screen the signers of particularly sensitive instruments â€” such as wills and powers of attorney, property deeds â€” for their true identity, their willingness to sign without duress or intimidation, and their awareness of the general import of the document. Some notarizations also necessitate the Notary to put the signer under a promise declaring under penalty of perjury that the information contained in a document is true and accurate.

As official representatives of the state, Notaries Public certify the proper execution of many of the life-changing documents of private citizens, some of those diverse transactions convey real estate, grant powers of attorney, establish a prenuptial agreement, or perform the multitude of other activities that enable our civil society to function. Notaries produce a trust that the critical signed documents we rely on are genuine and authentic. Such faith enables the responsive documents of commerce and law to be exchanged between strangers with full self-confidence in their reliability.

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