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**The Early Records of Coleshill c.1120-1549**

Coleshill was one of six hundred or so small market towns to emerge during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to form the framework for trade and commerce in late medieval England. Its early importance in the county is reflected in Domesday Book which reveals that in 1086 it was the royal administrative centre of the largest hundred in Warwickshire. The town of Coleshill thrived during the later middle ages, supporting a wide range of traders and artisans. It also provided a place for peasants to exchange the produce of their holdings for manufactured goods. It had a regional role, with links not only to Coventry and other small towns in Warwickshire but also to the wider Midlands. There was a national dynamic too with interaction between London traders and men from Coleshill. Also in this early period the woodlands and wastes in the rural parts of the manor were largely converted into agricultural land to create a landscape still recognisable today. Much of the evidence illustrating these developments is included in this volume, derived mainly from hundreds of medieval deeds, the earliest dating from the first half of the twelfth century. These have been supplemented by court rolls and wills and inventories from the early sixteenth century, and by other miscellaneous documents, such as inquisitions post mortem and tax lists. The Introduction discusses the documents and traces the development of town and rural parish during the later middle ages.