The name is derived from the Old Norse word *mikill* (meaning big or great) and the Old English words *trog* (a trough) and *ford*.[5]

The only artifacts found from the prehistoric period are an arrowhead and a worked flake which were found in the nearby settlement of Hoole Village. The arrowhead is dated from the Early Bronze to the Early Iron Age (2350 BC to 701 BC).[6] The Roman road from Chester to Wilderspool (near the present town of Warrington) passed through or near the village. It is likely that the road known as The Street, which passes to the northwest of the village, was the route of the Roman road. Finds of Roman coins, jewellery and pottery have been found in the village and nearby. There is also evidence of Roman practice camps in the nearby settlements of Hoole Village and Picton.[7] Mickle Trafford is not mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,[8] but a raised area in a marsh by the River Gowy to the northeast of the present village, was known as the "Isle of Chester".[9] Here lived a hermit called Plegmund, who was later to become the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the area is now known as Plemstall, which means "Plegmund's holy place".[10]

Formerly a township in Plemstall Parish, Broxton Hundred, the population was 247 in 1801, 303 in 1851, 268 in 1901 and 348 in 1951.[1]

The village was previously served by two railway stations: Mickle Trafford and Mickle Trafford East. Although the stations have been demolished, both lines remain operational.