

Lineage of Laura Jean Marquis, Tennessee, USA

I received the following email on 12 July 2020: -

Hello,

I am an American Marquis....

A Marquis cousin sent me an article about your book. I definitely would like a copy.

I have been looking into my genealogy and my particular line of Marquis "seems" to have come from France, to Scotland for a bit (taken in by MacDonalDs) then to Ireland, where William Marquis married Margaret Colville and started a family. They immigrated to the US in 1720.

I have been to the UK quite a bit, and the last few years have been trips to the Border as my mother was an Armstrong.

I very much look forward to hearing from you. I would love to buy a copy of your book. ***Life and Times of The Marquis Family of Argyll.***

Thank you,

Laura Jean Marquis. FSAScot

Nashville TN

Thus began a discussion on whether our two families were related.

My decision to write a book on the history of the Marquis family started from a debate I had with my uncle on whether our family origins were Scottish or French Huguenot. My grandfather certainly believed we had Huguenot roots, he vaguely remembered a lawsuit over an inheritance related to possible Huguenot ancestry, which members of our family apparently engaged in and lost. Correspondence with local Kintyre historian, Angus Martin, ended any question of a Huguenot connection and confirmed our Gaelic origins. He'd even written about our family in his book: *Kintyre – The Hidden Past*.

This was the same question that confronted Laura about her family origins, which clearly had evidence of both French Huguenot and Irish connections. What Laura's own research had revealed was that her family name 'Marquis' did in fact originate in France. Her earliest relative she was able to identify was called Guillaume H. Marquis/Marquess who had died in 1600 in Brittany, France. It was Guillaume's grandson, Samuel

Perrine Marquis (born 4 March 1640), who moved to Antrim in Ulster, Ireland, where he presumably met his wife, Rachel Touchstone. They had a son, also called Samuel, in 1660. Samuel married Margaret McComb and their son, William (born 1683), married Margaret Colville. On the face of it, these facts clearly suggest French Huguenot origins for Laura's surname. All three families would eventually emigrate to the USA.

However, a relative of Laura's, Flora Marquis Pyle, in an account of her family history, mentions a connection to the Gaelic Jacobite MacDonalds, which if true, would raise questions about the Huguenot roots theory. The marriages between three generations of French Marquises and Irish wives and the prevalence of Anglo first names in the French Marquis family might raise questions about their origins. Of Course, Irish links from this period do not necessary mean Gaelic origins, the so-called Protestant Plantation had resulted in largescale Lowland Protestant Scots migrating to Ulster. The names of these Irish wives appear to be more Scots than Gaelic.

It is conceivable I suppose that Guillaume Marquis, or possibly his father, had originally moved from Ulster to France, implying Gaelic roots. There was, indeed, much back and forth movement of peoples within the Celtic regions from the Western Isles and Ireland to Brittany. But I think this idea is a little farfetched and I feel Flora may have come across my Scots Gaelic Marquis family in her research and assumed, mistakenly, they were directly related. The Gaelic name for our family was Mhic Mharcuis and was Anglicised to 'Marquis' at the end of the 18th century.

With family histories being so complicated, one can never be certain in these matters, although, in this case, I'd put my money on French Huguenot antecedents for Laura's family name.

Steve Marquis, 2020

See the Documents Section on this website for further information on Laura's family history.