



The Huguenot Herald

The Huguenot Society of South Carolina

Volume 19, Number 2
May, 2009

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Fontaine/Maury Society Annual Meeting, August 21-23
johnmay@marlborolectric.net
- XVth International Meeting of the Huguenot Descendants, September 18-25
www.huguenots.fr
- Pierre Chastain Family Association Reunion, September 24-26
www.pierrechastain.com
- Fall Service, Sunday, October 18, 10:30am
- 5th International Huguenot Conference, Sept. 3-6, 2010
www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/huguenot2010

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Sketches of Huguenot Ancestors – Thomas Lamar – Huguenot. Or not?

by Harriott Cheves Leland

To date, most of the *Sketches* have been pretty straightforward, presenting outlines of French Protestants who left France prior to 1787 and who have been proved and claimed as ancestors by members of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina. This *Sketch* will examine Thomas LaMar, claimed as an ancestor by members of the Society until the lineage was “closed” due to questions as to whether or not LaMar was a French Protestant or a French Catholic.¹ To date, this question has not been resolved, although much effort has been made to do so. It is our hope that someone in the membership will undertake to complete the research needed to either prove or disprove the validity of Thomas LaMar as an ancestor. The “huguenotness” of Lamar was questioned because he left a nice bequest to a Jesuit priest in his will and because he left Virginia for Maryland, which had been a Catholic province up to the mid-1600s.²

As I hope the membership knows, the staff of the Society continues to research both ancestors and lineages in order to update and “refresh” the files and to ensure that the information we have is correct. In some instances this is not difficult – in others it is time-consuming, tedious and does not always yield the desired outcome. The latter is what has happened with the LaMar line. In 1998 the line was “closed,” meaning that no new members could join the Society until proof that Thomas LaMar was a Huguenot was found. This can be somewhat unsettling and disconcerting for members who have relatives who want to join.

I had not been working for the Society for very long when a prospective member, the brother of a long-term member, requested an application form which I dutifully sent off. However, when I went to the files to see if there was documentation in them, I found “CLOSED” written on the files in red and a letter written in 1998 from the National Huguenot Society to this Society agreeing “that this line should be closed, until better documentation can be found.” This was based upon the 1712/174 will of Thomas Lamar in which he left 500 pounds of tobacco to a Jesuit priest, a Mr. Thorrol, the reasoning being that a Huguenot would never have done so and that Lamar must have been Catholic. In addition, the fact that Maryland had been a Catholic colony through the mid-17th century was cited as a reason that a Protestant would never have left Virginia and moved to Maryland. My counter argument that the son of a Catholic would probably not have married the sister of an Anglican minister and that Maryland was not a Catholic colony after the mid-1600s³ (so Lamar could have been Protestant) was not accepted since there was no documentation.

Research turned up the following information. Documentation has been noted, when it appears.

Thomas LaMar arrived in Virginia with his brother Peter, but they moved to Maryland where they received naturalization papers on 17 Nov 1663, identifying them as “late of Virginia, and subjects of the crown of France...”. A year later on 8 Nov 1664 Thomas and Peter Leamar/Lemore bought 350 acres in Maryland. Both Lamars received other deeds and land grants in Calvert County, including one in 1665 to Thomas for the expense of transporting “himself and his wife, Mary, into the province of Maryland.”⁴

(continued on inside)

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Making a will is an important step in wise stewardship.

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Contact us at (843) 723-3235 if you'd like more information. Let us know if you decide to include the Huguenot Society of South Carolina in your will or estate plans, and we will include you as a member of the **1685 Society** as our way of saying, "Thank you very much."

New Members

The following were accepted into membership at the April Board meeting:

- Folline, Allen Gantt III Mt. Pleasant, SC
Elie Horry
- Hambright, Alice Batchelor Charleston, SC
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- Jones, Lynn Peterson Sapphire, NC
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- McBane, John Gilmer, Jr. Charlotte, NC
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- Watson, LeRoy Wilbur III Charleston, SC
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- Williamson, Brenda Paige Richardson .. Boiling Springs, SC
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- Williamson, Joshua Ira Boiling Springs, SC
Claude Philippe de Richebourg

From the President...

The Reformation: Awakening and Conflict



This year is a particularly good year to look back to our roots, since this is the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth. Perhaps we should all brush up on our understanding of the influence of Calvin in the development of the French Reformed (Huguenot) Church in the sixteenth century. Did you know that Calvin's teaching was an inspiration for the growth of several different Protestant churches in various nations? Are you aware that the Reformation sought to restrain the excesses of the Papacy, and limit the absolute power of monarchies? Would you agree that the Reformation stimulated the growth of democratic governments in Western Civilization?

An important objective of our Society is to promote a better understanding of the values and culture of the Huguenots. We should be mindful that the religious, and to a degree, the political freedom we enjoy today was won by courageous men and women who held firmly to their faith in spite of persecution, hardship, and the threat of death.

The Reformation was a remarkable period of awakening when individuals began to question why everyone shouldn't be able to read and understand the Scriptures for themselves. It was an age of enlightenment that resulted in churches which followed the early Christian model more closely. It was the onset of a new age of church governance, of limiting monarchies from mandating religious faith or church affiliation, and a new age of exploration.

John Calvin was a brilliant scholar and lecturer whose teaching shaped the structure of many early Protestant churches in Europe. The extent of his influence is still evident today. The French Reformed Church played a prominent part in developing that legacy, and the Huguenot Church in Charleston is an example of that wonderful heritage.

The Huguenots in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were known for their faith, their independence, their courage, their resourcefulness, and their honesty. These traits are as important today as they were four hundred years ago.

Robert M. Prioleau

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Six Blind Men and an Elephant

Six blind men and an elephant – and Huguenots – in London. What in world does this mean? Watch for a more serious and extended article on the Boyd Symposium held at Danson House, Kent, England in this year's *Transactions*. But, for the moment, change the opening sentence (which will be explained in *Transactions*) to "Seven Historians and a Huguenot." Dee Ressinger, Vice-President of Orange Quarter and Cheves Leland, Staff member, just returned from a week of research and talks in London – one talk by each given to the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland, as well as one each at Danson House for the Boyd Symposium. Everything went well. The talks and research done and being done on the Boyd Family was well-received by the mostly British audience, which also very much liked the American tea and benne seed wafers brought from Charleston.

Sketches, (continued from page 1)

The will of Peter Lamar was written 9 Oct 1693 and was probated in Calvert County on 31 Mar 1694. He left daughters, but no sons.⁵

Thomas Lamar acquired a number of plantations in Maryland, including land called The Fishing Place in Calvert County which was granted to him 5 Apr 1677 and which became his home.

After the death of his 1st wife Mary, he married Ann {possibly Pottinger} who was executrix of his will, written 4 Oct 1712 and probated 29 May 1714. Thomas Lamar named two sons in his will, Thomas and Peter, and his wife Anne, and he left them land in America, as well and in England. The will was witnessed by John Pottenger, Jr., Samuel Pottenger and John Turner, Jr. In addition to bequests of his land and estate to his sons and wife, Lamar also left “unto the Priest Mr. Thurrol, five hundred pounds of good clean toba^c.”⁶ It is this last bequest to Mr. Thorrol which caused the problem, because Thurrol has been identified as a Jesuit priest.

According to the records I have found, Father George Thorold was born 11 Feb. 1670 in Berkds, England. He took his vows 19 June 1709 and was sent in 1700 to the Maryland Mission where he “labored for forty-four years,” dying 15 Nov 1742 in Maryland.⁷ According to another reference, Mr. Thorold “came in for a tongue lashing from Governor Seymour on June 9 1708” for christening the dying child of a servant who was Catholic.⁸ There is also mention of a 1641 incident which involved Thomas Gerard, a Catholic, who was “fined 500 pounds of tobacco to be given to the first minister to arrive in the Province,” due to a dispute over a Protestant chapel which he had built for his wife and her friends.⁹

Thomas Lamar was buried in Prince George County, MD, on land formerly part of Calvert County.¹⁰ His eldest son, Thomas Lamar “married Martha Urquhart, a sister of the Reverend John Urquhart, Director of All Faith Parish in Saint Mary’s County.”¹¹ Thomas Lamar [Jr.] died in 1748, leaving property to his wife, six sons and two sons-in-law. In 1755, all but two of the remaining heirs decided to sell their holdings and move south. “The records show that . . . [they] disposed of their broad acres to their uncle, the wealthy divine, John Urquhart.”¹²

Some of the information given above is documented, with original documents either cited or quoted, but some is not. The Vestry records of All Faith Parish have been microfilmed and are in the Maryland State Archives, but the Society has been unable to find someone to see if there is anything in them which would prove that the Lamar family was Protestant/Anglican. There seems to be as least as much reason to claim that Thomas and Peter Lamar were Protestants as to claim they were Catholic, but documentation is needed to provide certain proof of Thomas Lamar’s religious persuasion. At least one reference in the Manakin records lists Thomas and Peter Lamar as “Virginia Huguenots Outside Manakin,” but no sources are cited.¹³

Although there are a number of family histories, none of them provide conclusive evidence that the Lamar brothers were descendants of French Protestants and since the lineage was questioned and closed, it will remain that way until proof can be found to re-open the discussion and resolve the issue. Hopefully, by pointing out the problem with this line, members and applicants will realize the importance of documented sources.

Please contact the Society if you think you can help us solve this problem.

¹ Please note that when a line is “closed,” present members are notified and are not dropped.

² 1998 letters between Finnell and Gay.

³ Beitzell, EW *The Jesuit Missions of St. Mary’s County Maryland* 1-3, 25, 32.

⁴ LeMar, HD, *History of the Lamar or Lemar Family in America* 21-22. Mays, Edward, *Genealogy and History A Branch of the Family of LAMAR with it’s (sic) Related Families...*9. Borchers, DM, *Thomas Lamar the Immigrant 300 Years of Descendants* 6. *Maryland land records-Vol. IX*, folio 312, as referenced by Switzer, AL in *The Lamar Heritage*.

⁵ Mays 12.

⁶ The Maryland Calendar of Wills Vol. III & IV: 11 and a copy of the will of Thomas Lamar.

⁷ *The Woodstock Letters A Record...Vol. LXII:287* [no references given].

⁸ 2002 e-mail quoting Beitzell and *Proceedings of the Council of Maryland, 1708: 242-242*.

⁹ 2002 e-mail, quoting Beitzell, EW, *The Jesuit Missions of St. Mary’s County, MD* 19-10.

¹⁰ Mays 12.

¹¹ Mays 12. There is a footnote number 21, but the footnotes for the chapter are not included in the material in the files and I have not been able to obtain a copy of the original book to check the footnotes.

¹² Mays 13.

¹³ *The Huguenot No. 25: 167*

Carolina Day Parade

Do you love a parade? Join your fellow Huguenots (and other South Carolina patriots) on Saturday, June 27 to celebrate Carolina Day. The parade participants will gather at Washington Park about 10:15am; the parade begins at 10:30. Look for President Bob Prioleau and the Huguenot flag.

GIFTS FROM THE HUGUENOT SOCIETY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

138 Logan Street
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Blazer emblems (Huguenot cross)	29.50

(continued next page)

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(*There are no copies of Volumes 1, 3-9, 13-23, 34, 44, 50, 51, 68, 70, 72, 74-75, 77-79, 81, 82, 110.)	
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