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A SHORT SKETCH

of the

CALMES FAMILY



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Brooklandville, Maryland



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A SHORT SKETCH OF THE CALMES FAMILY

By WALTER H. BUCK

The Calmes Family was one of a number of French Huguenot families which fled from France at or about the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Such families usually went first to England and afterwards many of them came to America. As will be shown later in this sketch, the first record of the purchase of land in Virginia by the Calmes Family was in 1705. Only twenty years, therefore, elapsed from the Revocation until this purchase.

The best authority on the Huguenots in America is the distinguished scholar, Gilbert Chinard of Princeton University. In 1934 he edited "A Huguenot Exile in Virginia". This is a translated reprint of the story of Durand of Dauphine first published at the Hague in 1687. Efforts to identify the author "with known members of the family have proved fruitless" says Chinard, which appears to be usually the case with the Huguenots.

Durand visited Ralph Wormeley at "Rosegill" and William Fitzhugh at "Bedford".

The Calmes Family is an important French family, most of whose members reside in Languedoc and in Southern France. However, as in the case of Durand of Dauphine, attempts to connect the American family of Calmes with known members of the French Calmes family have failed. For assistance to some scholar who has the time and patience I give below certain Calmes Family Data from France which was sent to me by Mrs. Palmer Campbell, wife of the Rector of the Episcopal Church at Sandston, Virginia, who was a Miss Calmes. Her father was William Bourne Calmes who died when Mrs. Campbell was very young. Their home adjoined "Helmly", the home of her uncle, Major Fielding Calmes.

Pierre Calmes — "Scriptor Avitatis", Carcassonne. Mentioned in Acts of 1445, 1456, 1458.

Pierre Calmes, Notary of Trebes 1524, (son of the Pierre Calmes named above). His three sons were Jean Calmes; Claud Calmes, Seigneur de Barbeiran; and Pierre Calmes, Seigneur de Saint Julien (will dated 1545).

Claud de Calmes, Seigneur de Saint Julien, son of Pierre Calmes Seigneur de Saint Julien, Councillor of Carcassonne in 1619.

Jean Francois de Calmes Seigneur de Saint Julien, son of Claud de Calmes, Seigneur de Saint Julien.

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Guillaume de Calmes (born 1642), Seigneur de Barbeiran, son of Jean Francois de Calmes, Seigneur de Saint Julien. (This last named may have been the ancestor of the Virginia Calmes Family for one of the legends in the family is that the original Marquis Calmes come to Virginia with a brother William who doubtless was named for his father). References to Marquis Calmes in many historical writings as being a French Marquis are without foundation.

In Fairfax Harrison's "Landmarks of Old Prince William", Volume 1, Chapter 13, we find that Nicholas Hayward of London purchased from Lord Culpepper, who was then the proprietor of the Northern Neck, 30,000 acres of land in Stafford County. In 1686 Hayward together with Richard Foote and Robert Bristow of London and George Brent of Stafford County formed a partnership to exploit this land. Eventually the Haywards sold their land, the Footes settled on their lands and so did the Brents, while the Bristows' land was ultimately confiscated.

On some of this land on Aquia Creek the Calmes settled. Harrison notes that "in 1706 and 1709 one who is listed in the land books as 'Marquess Calmeby' had proprietary grants on the upper water of Aquia". (Page 189). This was Marquis Calmes I and Harrison suggests that the Huguenots in Stafford County were an overflow from the Huguenot settlement at Manakintown. However, in Brock's authoritative "Huguenot Emigration to America" (Collections Virginia Historical Society, Volume V, 1886) which tells of Manakintown the Calmes name does not appear. That settlement took place in 1700 and included 500 emigrants under the leadership of Marquis de la Muce and the land occupied by them was a gift from the Colony of Virginia.

William F. Boogher, the author of "Gleanings of Virginia History", in an unpublished note on the Calmes Family records that on May 11, 1705, a land warrant for 711 acres on the North Run of Aquia Creek was assigned to Marquis Calmes I by Nicholas Brent. This warrant was confirmed to him by a grant from Lady Culpepper, Thomas Fairfax, and Catherine, his wife, October 5, 1705. (Liber 3, folio 147, Northern Neck Land Grants, Richmond, Virginia). It was actually executed in Lancaster County at the time when Robert (King) Carter was the Agent for the Proprietors but the original records having been destroyed, Carter's signature as Agent cannot be verified.

In addition, Boogher records that he received another grant for 744 acres on the South Run of Aquia Creek adjoining his own lands and the lands of Henry Brent and Col. Robert Carter. (Liber 3, folio 223, Northern Neck Land Grants). These two tracts were surveyed by Thomas Gregg.

This Marquis Calmes I, according to Boogher, died in Stafford County prior to 1741 but because of the destruction of the early records of that County further evidence could not be found. Boogher relates that his son, Marquis Calmes II, was educated in France and returned to Virginia about 1723, and on October 21, 1741, purchased 108 acres of land on Hope Creek, Stafford County (Liber E, folio 342, Northern Neck Land Grants). This was surveyed by John Savage.

According to Harrison, the land grants referred to by him adjoined those of William Waller, but Harrison was mistaken in thinking that Marquis Calmes I married William Waller's daughter Winnifred for, in fact, her husband was Marquis Calmes II. We know that Marquis Calmes II died in Frederick County in 1755 and that letters on his estate were granted in that year to his eldest son, William Waller Calmes (Frederick County Order Book 16, page 340).

According to Boogher, Marquis Calmes II was born in Stafford County in 1705 and if this latter date is correct he could not have been the Marquis Calmes who purchased land in 1705. The inscription on the tombstone of Winnifred Waller Calmes in the Old Chapel Cemetery near Millwood records her death on October 6, 1751, aged 42, she and her husband having been married twenty-six years. Their marriage, therefore, took place in 1725 when she was sixteen years old and he, according to Boogher, was twenty years old.

The records of Frederick County show that Marquis Calmes II was one of the Justices composing the first Court held in Frederick County, that he was an officer in the Virginia Militia, that he was on the Vestry of Frederick Parish and that when Winchester was laid out in 1753 Marquis Calmes II became the owner of Lot 16.

In Wayland's "History of Shenandoah County" I find the following (page 668), "In the year 1754 there were only four 'chairs' in Frederick County. A chair (chaise) was a two-wheeled gig and the four in Frederick County referred to belonged to "Lord Fairfax, Colonel James Wood, Marquis Calmes and John Hite."

Marquis Calmes II's wife, as already stated, died October 6, 1751, and her tombstone now rests in the Old Chapel Cemetery near Millwood, which cemetery remains as a memorial to the loving care of Dr. Robert C. Randolph of "New Market". From "The Old Chapel" published by the Blue Ridge Press in 1906, it appears that the tombstone of Winnifred Waller Calmes, the wife of Marquis Calmes II, was placed there by Dr. Robert Randolph who is said to have brought the tombstone from near the Tilthammer Mill (Page 2) and again (page 25) "that it was found at the 'Vineyard', repaired, and placed here by him."

(Editor's Note: On July 12, 1859, Dr. Robert C. Randolph of "New Market" had the tombstone of Mrs. Calmes removed from the head of her grave on "the Vineyard farm.....near the Tilthammer Mill" to the Old Chapel, or Burwell, Cemetery. Marquis Calmes' stone would also have been removed from his grave beside his wife's had it not been shattered beyond repair. From fragments of the inscription, he found the date of his death, 1755; and his age, 50 years. Of all this Dr. Randolph wrote a full and interesting account, which he entered on pp. 5 and 6 of his Record of the Old Chapel Cemetery.)

The first burial made in the "Old Chapel Cemetery" was in 1793; the property having been conveyed to the vestry by Colonel Nathaniel Burwell of "Carter Hall" by a deed dated November 25, 1792.

My ancestor, Charles Buck, was on the reorganized vestry of that parish in 1752 together with Lord Fairfax, Gabriel Jones, the eccentric King's attorney and, most important of all, John Ashby. John Ashby, a great Indian fighter, was present at the defeat of Braddock and made his famous ride from the battlefield to Williamsburg to convey the news of the defeat to the authorities. He was the ancestor of Turner Ashby, the knightly cavalry leader and colonel of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry C. S. A. who in June 1862 was killed on the Port Republic Road near Harrisonburg; having dismounted and personally rallied an infantry regiment which was falling back. Charles Buck's descendant, Walter Buck, my uncle for whom I was named, was a lieutenant in Company E of Ashby's Seventh Virginia Cavalry and he, too, was killed in June 1863 leading a cavalry charge near Upperville.

Marquis Calmes II's land was known as "Calmes Neck" and its location is shown as being opposite the "Vineyard Farm" on Curtis Chappelle's Map (being No. 22) in the Proceedings of the Clarke County Historical Association, Volume VI, 1946. In a deed from Thomas Lord Fairfax, dated December 15, 1747, this land (500 acres) was described as "ungranted land being on a neck of the Shenandoah River joining on a line of my own land and called by name 'Manor of Leeds'." It was surveyed by John Warner and revised by James Genn. George Washington's diary for Saturday, March 12, 1747/8, tells of a trip he made to the valley together with George Fairfax and under the above date this item appears. "This morning Mr. James Genn the surveyor came to us. We travel'd over the Blue Ridge to Capt. Ashby's on Shannondoah River. Nothing remarkable happen'd." Genn was Fairfax's chief surveyor who taught George Washington the art of surveying. Harrison tells us that on John Warner's Northern Neck Map of 1737 Manassas Gap was written "Calmes Gap". This marking "Calmes Gap" is to be found on the map in the back of Volume I of Harrison's "Landmarks of Old Prince William" and on Page 35 of that volume appears the following with reference to Calmes Gap, "This undoubtedly marked an otherwise unrecorded intermediate station of the migration of the Huguenot Marquis Calmes from Aquia Creek to the valley."

From a note by Everard Kidder Meade, the well-known authority on Clarke County history, it appears that Marquis Calmes II did live on the "Vineyard Plantation" but that plantation, however, was never owned by him, being the property of the Burwell Family. The same note also refers to the fact that Marquis Calmes II was a large landowner (Proceedings of the Clarke County Historical Association, Volume IV, 1945, page 32). He was also a land speculator, there being a grant of 60,000 acres of land on the Monogahela River "to Marquis Calmers and others....." (5 Virginia Historical Magazine 178).

In Rose M. E. MacDonald's (Mrs. J. Lewis Skoggs) "Clarke County a Daughter of Frederick" (page 6) we are told that Marquis Calmes ".....was employed by Nathaniel Burwell to experiment with the culture of grapes on Burwell's land in Frederick County." This, of course, could not have been Marquis Calmes II, for according to Mr. Meade's note just referred to, he died when Nathaniel Burwell was five years old. The reference may be to his son, Marquis Calmes III who was a large landowner, an officer in the Militia and a vestryman of Frederick Parish, but whatever the nature of the employment it must have been of a kind suitable to a person of his position.

(Editor's Note: An old and pleasant legend, which until lately had been widely accepted as fact, had it that Colonel Nathaniel Burwell had met in Williamsburg a Marquis Calmes and had been so fascinated by this "French Huguenot nobleman", that to secure him as a near neighbor in Frederick County he presented him with one of his plantations there; that the Marquis accepted this token of his esteem and made his home on the land thus given him, which became known as "The Vineyard", because upon its acres he planted "the first grape vines ever set out west of the Blue Ridge.)

Marquis Calmes II was not only a large landowner but also one of the most prominent men in Frederick County of that time and why he and his wife should have been buried on the "Vineyard Plantation" is difficult to understand. Mr. Meade's opinion is that Marquis Calmes II found it more convenient to make his home at the "Vineyard" instead of at "Calmes Neck", because it removed the necessity of his crossing the Shenandoah every time he went to Winchester and in consequence he leased the "Vineyard" from Carter Burwell.

(Editor's Note: The late Richard E. Griffith believed it probable that there was a public burying ground at the Tilthammer Mill, perhaps adjoining a chapel. In the mid-eighteenth century there was a considerable settlement at this point. John Esten Cooke, writing in 1851, gave the following pertinent description of the place: "Where you see them threshing wheat near the Tilthammer Mill, once stood the greatest Tavern in all these parts: the level there was the race course, where all the (now) old fellows in the county assembled to bet, play and back their favorite horses. The Tavern was burnt down twenty years ago—. By the 'Tilthammer', beneath a group of lofty palm-like trees, (are) some obscure graves—the Huguenot graves—no doubt a century old. See how the moss has covered this obscure stone." (Southern Literary Messenger, Vol. XVII, p. 223, April, 1851). The race course was across (east) of the Spout Run, on what is now

the Whiting Farm. That Marquis Calmes lived on the "Vineyard" farm rests on tradition. There is no known evidence that he leased it; it is certain that he never owned it. Mr. Griffith believed it unlikely that Calmes and his wife should have been buried on land which he did not own, especially when he did, in fact, own land immediately across the river from the place where they were buried. This fact, plus the size of the settlement at that place led Mr. Griffith to believe it probable that they were buried in a public cemetery.)

The exact date of the death of Marquis Calmes II is unrecorded but letters on his estate were granted to his eldest son, William Calmes, July 1, 1755. (Frederick County Order Book 16, page 340).

William Waller Calmes, the son of Marquis Calmes II, was the elder brother of Marquis Calmes III who died in 1794, and also of Fielding Calmes who married the daughter of William Helm. The latter's home, "Helmly", is believed to be the oldest stone house in Clarke County.

On March 24, 1760, William Waller Calmes purchased from Lord Fairfax 1110 acres of land in "Frederick County on Bull Run". (Book N, page 157, Northern Neck Records). "Survey made by Colonel George Washington"!

His sister, Isabella Calmes, the daughter of Marquis Calmes II and Winnifred Waller Calmes, married William Richardson and is buried in the Buck Family Cemetery near Buckton in what is now Warren County, Virginia. Her gravestone is much like that of her mother's which, as stated, is in the Old Chapel Cemetery near Millwood and an inscription on it shows that she died June 10, 1796, at the age of 69.

The Richardsons were Quakers from Maryland, the family having been large landowners in Anne Arundel County, as shown by the records there. The immigrant, William Richardson, knew William Penn in England, who was a guest of the Richardsons when he came to Maryland to meet Lord and Lady Baltimore.

Isabella Calmes Richardson's three daughters, Miriam, Mary, and Ann, married respectively three brothers, namely, Colonel John Buck, Charles Buck, and Captain Thomas Buck. Colonel John Buck and his wife are buried in the cemetery at Lexington, Kentucky, near the monument to Henry Clay. Charles Buck and Captain Thomas Buck, with their wives, are buried in the Buckton Cemetery.

William Waller Calmes married the daughter of Captain George Neville. One of his sons was Marquis Calmes IV (1755-1839) who was born on his father's plantation "Peace and Plenty" near the Shenandoah River.

Marquis Calmes IV, whose military record is recorded in Heitman's authoritative book, was a captain in the Second Virginia

Regiment of the Continental Line in the Revolutionary War and served in many battles, including those at Monmouth and Yorktown. Marquis Calmes IV moved to Kentucky after the Revolution and was a brigadier general in the Kentucky forces at the Battle of the Thames: (Collins' "History of Kentucky.")

My great uncle, William Mason Buck of "Bel Air", Front Royal, Virginia, (1809-1895) in his unpublished notes on the Buck Family and in an article published in the Southern Literary Messenger for May, 1895, entitled "The Shenandoah Valley — Some notes of an Octogenarian" gives an interesting account of Marquis Calmes IV and my uncle's grandfather, Captain George Blakemore, who was in the same regiment with Marquis Calmes IV. Captain Blakemore related to my uncle many interesting campaign memories, telling of his great admiration for General Lafayette and that he dined with him in Richmond on his last visit to the United States. My uncle lived with his grandfather, Captain Blakemore, while going to school at "Mantua"; now known as "Cleft Oak". The Blakemore home, "Cedar Grove", a stone house, is still standing in a ruined condition back of the Fair Grounds near Berryville. He and his brother, Thomas, were in the Battle of Brandywine where his brother was killed. He was, too, on the first Board of Trustees of the town of Berryville and a descendant of his now represents him in the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia.

George Blakemore married Elizabeth, the daughter of Colonel Henry Mauzy (born in 1721) and Ann Withers. John Mauzy, his brother, (born in 1723) was a famous surveyor and married Hester Foote.

In the Proceedings of the Clarke County Historical Association, Volume VII, 1947, page 43, it appears that in 1751 "John Mauz(e)y, a noted surveyor", surveyed for Colonel Fielding Lewis a tract of 3,000 acres of land purchased from Robert Carter Nicholas. The Mauzy Family was a prominent one in France and an interesting note on that family will be found in 58 Virginia Historical Magazine 112.

A John Mauzy, a surveyor, in 1797 laid off the town of Salem, now Marshall, but it seems improbable that he was the John Mauzy born in 1723. ("Fauquier During the Proprietorship" by H. C. Groome, page 207).

My great uncle visited Marquis Calmes IV at his home in Woodford County, Kentucky, in 1829 "Where he greatly enjoyed the relation of his many stirring episodes of a chequered and eventful life." Marquis Calmes IV was an intimate friend of Lafayette, and the latter visited him in 1825. Their families are said to have been friends in France, but this may be mere legend.

Lafayette was born and lived in Auvergne while the Calmes Family resided in the neighborhood of Toulouse, more than 100 miles away.

Marquis Calmes IV was described by my great uncle as being a man of gigantic stature, erect and well-preserved, but he adds that the proposal made in the Kentucky Legislature to erect a monument to him had never been consummated. However, there is a bronze plaque near Margaret Hall, a girls' school in Versailles, with this inscription on it:

NEAR THIS SPOT LIVED AND DIED
GENERAL MARQUIS DE LA CALMES
A GALLANT REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER
WHO NAMED THE CITY OF VERSAILLES.
ERECTED BY THE GENERAL MARQUIS CALMES CHAPTER
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
1927

Marquis Calmes IV was one of the Trustees when the town of Versailles, Kentucky, was laid out and it is said that the town's name was chosen by him. It is recorded by one who visited him in 1830 that "He wore knee breeches and a wig and always drove with his body servant four paces behind." As to the wig, this is confirmed by the portrait of Marquis Calmes IV which was painted by G. Frymeier in 1806 and which is now the property of the Chicago Historical Society.

Marquis Calmes had caused to be erected by his slaves in his lifetime a stone mausoleum in which he was buried and there he lies "like a warrior taking his rest".

And so I conclude this sketch of the honorable Huguenot family of Calmes and think it fitting that these references to the family, and especially to Marquis Calmes IV, who was certainly one of Clarke County's greatest sons, should be recorded and preserved in the Proceedings of that County's Historical Association.