

26 January 2013

Dear Douglas Cousins (all descended from William Douglas) and other interested parties,

It has been some time since you received an update about the search for the origins of William Douglas, b. abt 1610. It is not because nothing has been going on! On the contrary, a lot of detailed, methodical, and focused search work has been carried out with the results stored "in the cloud" so that any of us can look at what has been found. This report will summarize what has been taking place.

New sources that can be searched from this side of the pond have been discovered and are being scoured. Possibilities have surfaced and a lot of them have been eliminated. The elimination of false trails is useful as you can imagine.

Here is a quick summary of the work that has been carried out since the last report to you.

We have not engaged Colin Davidson since the last report. Rather we have been doing as much research as possible by accessing records via the Internet with the goal of leaving for Colin the "knots" we cannot untangle.

Julie Hornung has organized a Dropbox folder with sub-folders into which all of our findings have been deposited. Besides providing a storage place and a way to share our findings, we are trying to reduce the possibility that more than one of us would search the same record source. Among the subfolders is one created by Julie that compiles all the Douglas births, marriages, and deaths that have been found from either the Internet or by researchers. Betsey Howes and Marilyn Darling have contributed to the compilation. The volume of information in the Dropbox folders is quite impressive. If you would like to view these and/or help out just email Julie at sunnydaze1@hotmail.com (or any one of us) and we will invite you into the folder. The folder is not open to the public. By invitation only!

We have run into two other Douglas researchers along the way. Betsey found Gary Douglas, for whom we paid his DNA test (he doesn't match ours but that narrows our search). He has a good paper trail. Julie found Lynda Rich who has been to the Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO) searching for her Douglasses. Her family is clearly from Chipping Warden. She was nice enough to share her findings with us. Unfortunately, her brick wall is in 1637. Her findings are in the Dropbox folder.

Julie has also been keeping a record of the funds collected from you and for paying Colin and before him, Susan Comont. She reports that our account balance stands at \$519.52 (£323.25). Once we lay out the work we want Colin to do, we will ask him for an estimate. Right now we think we are fine for our first requests for both Northants Wills and Coopers Guild documents. We will let you know when we need more help.

Julie has been corresponding with Curt Leroy (one of Julie and my extended cousins) who had corresponded with the late John Andromeda to see if John had been able to figure out where William was born. Sadly he did not have that information. BUT in the notes he had, William stated his age as 65 in a deposition that was given in 1676. Unfortunately, John did not have a copy of it, nor know the person the deposition was for. ☹ Do any of you know the answer?

Betsey found the ships that came across the Atlantic in 1640. Julie has just discovered a passenger list that contains references to William and Anne and two children landing in Boston in 1640. There are reference numbers with the entries and Julie is working to understand reference numbers.

Betsey Howes has been keeping track of the FreeReg volunteers who are translating (from Latin), deciphering, and transcribing Parish registers in the parts of England where we believe William (and Anne Motely) lived. She reports that she just finished going through the newest Free-Reg postings and is going to make lists of the families that could be discerned in Raunds, Bugbrooke, Bradden and Wellingborough. These show births, marriages and deaths for the Douglas men, and some of the women. She adds, parenthetically, "I will say they were not in the least bit creative in their naming of children, with the same names being given over and over and over, across families (thanks so much)". There are some Williams but not a lot in these new postings. None are of the right age. Betsey is also searching Find-My-Past UK and Ancestry UK which are subscription sites. She also has been searching a free site called the Medieval England Genealogy. Parenthetically, Betsey has been in touch with a descendant of Douglases from Wootton whose mother was a Douglas. That family may come from the Easton Maudit line (her earliest known ancestor is named Joseph and Joseph as a given name is frequent in the EM family). But she hasn't heard back from her contact since before Christmas. The good news is that there are Easton Maudit male Douglas cousins who could test their y-DNA. Betsey will re-contact this Douglas descendant.

Betsey and Marilyn Darling have worked with the London records at Ancestry to find any William Douglas in the time frame that we assume William and Anne were actually in the London area but they have not found a good candidate. There are a number of Williams that show up in the right period but they stay in London well after 1640. Betsey checked the information on the baptisms of William and Anne's first three children in the London area – Ann Motley, Robert, and the first Elizabeth who died as an infant. The baptisms are mentioned in Leslie Mahler's article. She checked them through Ancestry UK and saw the original entries. Leslie had one date wrong and her understanding of the method of calculating birth dates from these entries was clarified when she saw the way they were entered. The year began in April (1640 for example) and Jan, Feb and March were assigned to the previous year (1639). So Robert was clearly baptized in 1639 by our current calendar. And (the first) Elizabeth was buried in 1640 not long before they left England.

At all the above mentioned sites, Betsey regularly checks all the counties surrounding Northamptonshire: Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire, Rutland, and Warwickshire. Besides Northamptonshire, the only other county that has a large Douglas population in the 1500's and 1600s is Cambridgeshire. Bedfordshire also has a few who moved south from Higham Ferrers Hundred in the 1600's and 1700's. She also checks Middlesex County since that is the area that William and Anne may have gone to after they married and before they came to America. Her best candidate is still a William Douglas born in 1609 in Easton Maudit, Northamptonshire. Getting our hands on his Will, if any, would be very useful.

Marilynn Darling has been searching records in all of the databases on Ancestry UK in the appropriate dates and locations (Northants and London) for variant spellings of Douglas and Motley with no results. That is to say, all that she found could not have been our William and Anne. Her complete findings are included in one of the Dropbox files.

This is a bit off topic but likely to be of interest to you. Marilyn and Betsey both have been curious about how it has happened that it is so widely reported on the Internet that William was born in

Scotland. And to boot, that he was born 9 Aug 1610. There is no proof offered. It just gets repeated and repeated. Here is what Marilyn reports.

“The pre-eminent book of descendants of William Douglas and Ann Mattle (Motley) who emigrated to Massachusetts about 1640 is: [A Collection of Family Records...Bearing the Name Douglas](#) by Charles Henry James Douglas, published by E. L. Freeman, 1879. In attempting to establish our progenitor's birth place, CHJD wrote to the Ringstead parish priest who found no marriage for William and Anne, nor baptism records for their children. The priest searched no farther than Ringstead. Thus CHJD concluded that William undoubtedly was from Scotland since he had a Scottish name and until recently that has been accepted blindly.

Much later by searching microfilm and online records of the existing Old Parish Records of Scotland, and assuming they followed the naming pattern of the oldest son being named for his paternal grandfather, researchers (including myself) could only find one family in Scotland that fit the times and names for this family. A William was a twin christened 8 Sep 1611 in High Church Parish, Glasgow, born to father Robert b.1588 and mother Jean Ross. William's twin was named Robert. So this family was chosen simply for it being the only one that matched time, names, and place. My trip to Scotland unearthed no corroborating evidence and proved false, fanciful online research that carried the family back to the Earl of Angus.

Another source, Genealogical Abstract of the Douglas Family by Bernard Gruenstein ([//grundycountyhistory.org/06_GenCh/Root_Cellar/Bowden%20Family7.pdf](http://grundycountyhistory.org/06_GenCh/Root_Cellar/Bowden%20Family7.pdf)) appears to have used CHJD as a basis but says William was born 9 Aug 1610 in Scotland. We're not sure where this date came from...”

Betsey adds, “Does anyone have any idea how we can get access to records from Castle Douglas? As I've looked for William lately I've been struck by two things. At least half of the "trees" say he was born in Ringstead (apparently wrong) and a substantial number gave an equally emphatic "born in Castle Douglas". Almost universal is that date of August 9 1610 whose ultimate source I've never been able to track down. I'm not trying to divert us from Northants, but why can't we either prove or disprove the “b in Castle Douglas”? If the records don't exist, then this is a fabrication, period. But if they exist, can we find someone to check them at some point in time?”

Betsey has been looking for a Robert Douglas in all the records in Northants she can access. There is no Robert Douglas to be found.

In connection with Marilyn and Betsey's work, we have contacted William Douglas of the Douglas Archives. He replies,

“I am of course one of those who continue to show Robert and Jean as the parents of William and Robert, b1610, in Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland. I do so with a rider that evidence appears to prove otherwise, but as we have no otherwise...”

Of course, there was no Castle Douglas in Kirkcudbrightshire in 1610. The settlement of Carlingwark became Castle Douglas in 1792 after Sir William Douglas laid out a new village on the site of the old. The nearby castle is Threave, which was abandoned in 1640. So a birth in 1610 there is possible, though it is doubtful Douglasses resided there in 1610; it was in the hands of the Maxwells.

The other possibility is Douglas Castle, now a ruin held by the Earl of Home. If records are held, then it is that family that would have them. However, there is another point of contact, and that is the Douglas Museum, in the village of Douglas.

As to why do so many make these claims, the answer is, sadly, that many of us copy other websites, and few do the basic ground research to prove any of it.”

To conclude this section on the claims that William was born in Castle Douglas, Marilyn reports that on a visit to the Douglas Museum in 2006, the Museum holds no birth records early enough to include William. She also did some searching in Glasgow and found no records for our William.

At this point, we have narrowed things down to two sources that hold the most promise for us. However, we can't explore them without help from professional genealogists in England. The records are not available over the Internet. The documents we are seeking must be pulled from the archives manually and then scanned digitally or photocopied. The sources are (1) the Wills of specific Douglases (and a few others who had a close associations with them) and we have a list of candidates, and (2) the records of the Coopers Guild. (William was a cooper and probably served an apprenticeship and was accepted into the Guild.)

As you know, Wills usually name spouses, children, and sometimes other relatives. They also name the places where these people lived and provide dates. Unfortunately these Wills will most likely be in Latin. Does anyone have some ability to read Latin? Know of someone who would help us?

The Coopers Guild records will show the name of the Master and the place where the apprenticeship took place, along with dates. The records are in London. Unfortunately, they have never been indexed but we know who we are looking for and the time period during which he would have served his apprenticeship. London is too far away for Colin Davidson to search the Guild records economically. Fortunately, Colin has a colleague who lives within a reasonable distance from the records and who Colin would trust with the search.

So here is where things stand. Comments? Suggestions? Questions?

Best regards,

Ed Douglass
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