

**THE NAME AND FAMILY OF FRASER OR FRAZ(I)ER**

Compiled by THE MEDIA RESEARCH BUREAU

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## THE NAME AND FAMILY OF FRASER OR FRAZ(I)ER

The name of Fraser or Fraz(i)er is said to have been of French origin and to have originated with the family coat-of-arms, which bore strawberry blossoms or fraises on the shield. The name was Frezeau, Frizel, and de la Frizaliere in the Province of Anjou, France, where the first records of the family of that name are found. On the later records in England and America it is found in various forms of Frazer, Fraser, Fraisure, Frayser, Fraizier, Frisel, Fraysel, Frazier, Frasier, Frazor, Freazer, Fraisur and others.

Some authorities claim that the family went from France to Scotland in the person of Pierre Fraser, Seigneur de Troile, who went as ambassador to Scotland in the service of King Charlamagne about the year 807 a.d. Others believe that the first of the name to make their permanent residence in Scotland were three brothers of Norman blood, John, Alexander, and Francis, who settled there about 1060. The first settlements of these three brothers are said to have been in East Lothian and Tweeddale, although the family later became one of the most important clans in Inverness Shire.

One of the earliest records of the family is of Gilbert de Fraser, living in 1109, who had three sons, Oliver, Udard, and perhaps Bernard. Of these, Oliver died without issue and was succeeded in the family estates and fortune by his nephew, Adam, son of Udard. Adam was followed by his eldest son Laurence, who had Laurence who died without issue in the fourteenth century. The line of succession then reverted to the descendants of the third son of Gilbert.

Bernard, son of the third son of Gilbert, was appointed Sheriff of Sterling in 1234 and was the possessor of many lands and titles. Bernard married Mary Ogilvie, grand-daughter of Prince Henry of Scotland, and had issue of Sir Gilbert who had Sir Simon, Sir Andres, and William.

The eldest of these, Sir Simon, was succeeded by his only son Sir Simon Fraser who met his death in the service of William Wallace. Having been convicted as traitor to England, the estates, honors, and titles of Sir Simon were confiscated by the king.

From that time forward, the line of descent of the Frasers was through a cousin of Sir Simon, Sir Andrew Fraser, whose descendant Simon was the father of Hugh Fraser who made his home at Lovat prior to 1510 and had issue of Alexander, Hugh, John, Duncan, Margaret, Agnes, and Cecilia, the second of whom became the first Lord Fraser de Lovat in the fifteenth century.

Through seven generations, the Lords of Lovat bore the Christian name of Hugh. The last of these was succeeded by his eldest son Simon in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

### Fraser Families in the United States

From the various branches of this noble family of Scotland are descended most, if not all, of the American families of the name of Fraser and Fraz(i)er. One of the first of the family of whom there is definite record in New England was William Frazer of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1640. Unfortunately, he left little record of his family.

Sometime before 1656, two brothers William and James Frizell or Frazer (their descendants used both forms of the name) came to Massachusetts as political outcasts from Scotland. William made his home at Braintree and died in 1663, leaving six sons William, George, John, James, Joseph, and Samuel.

James, brother of William, made his residence at Roxbury where he married Sarah Busketh and had issue by her of Mary, James, Samuel, Sarah, Benjamin, Hannah, Joseph, and Ebenezer.

James, oldest son of the emigrant James, was the father by his wife Mary of three sons, John, James, and Isaac.

Samuel, second son of the emigrant James, was the father by his wife Martha of Martha, Ebenezer, and Samuel. In later life he removed to Framingham where he died in 1718.

About 1685, Colin Fraser or Frazer came from Scotland to Newbury, Massachusetts, and was married in that year to Martha Stuart. They later removed to Rowley where they were the parents of Simon, John (died young), Hannah, John, Ebenezer, Gershom, Nathan, Abigail, and Lawson.

Many others of the name were among the Scotch emigrants of the eighteenth century. Of these, one John Fraser went to Charleston, South Carolina, about 1700. A John Fraysure or Frasure was at Virginia in 1700. The Reverend Alexander Frazier was in Maryland as early as 1727. And the Reverend John Frazier was in the last mentioned colony prior to 1742.

In 1752 Captain John Frazier was married at Boston, Massachusetts, to which place he had emigrated from Inverness, Scotland, sometime before, to Sarah Ingraham by whom he had Sarah, Catharine, Mary, Nalbrough, Susanna, John, Joseph, and Lydia.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century, another John Frazier came from Scotland to Pennsylvania and later removed to Virginia. He married Rebecca Story and was the father by her of William, Daniel, and Thomas. By a second wife named Margaret, he had issue of Jane, Rebecca, Elizabeth, and Hannah.

The descendants of these branches of the family in America have spread to practically every state of the Union and have aided as much in the growth of the country as their ancestors aided in the founding of the nation. They have been noted for their courage, energy, industry, thriftiness, honesty, piety, ambition, and moral and physical strength.

Among those of the name who fought as officers in the War of the Revolution were lieutenants John Frazer and Alexander Fraser of South Carolina, lieutenants Anthony and Falvey Frazer of Virginia, Quartermaster-General John Gizzard Frazer of Massachusetts, Captain John Frazier of Maryland, and Brigadier-General Persifor Frazer of Pennsylvania.

John, James, Simon, Hugh, William, Alexander, and Samuel are some of Christian names most highly favored by this family for its male members.

A few of the many members of the family who have distinguished themselves in America in more recent times are:

Charles Fraser of South Carolina, painter, 1782-1860  
Persifor Frazer of Pennsylvania, geologist, son of the preceding 1844-1909

THE COAT OF ARMS OF THE ANCIENT SCOTTISH FAMILY

FRASER OR FRAZ(I)ER

The crest and motto given being those most frequently recurring in the records of the family:

Arms Azure, three fraises or cinquefoils argent

Crest On a wreath argent and azure, the head of a stag proper

Motto I am reddie

Arms taken from page 23 of "Annals of the Frazier Family" by Walter S. Frazier and from the frontispiece of "The Frazier and West Families" by J. G. Leach.

## STORIES OR LEGENDS ON THE FRASERS

Sent to Marguerite Winget Ogden by Mrs. Erma Shepherd Griffith, Station B, Ross Pavilion, Poughkeepsie, New York, in 1958. She is a historian on Scottish names, etc.

"Fraser is from the French for strawberry. The legend is that the strawberry leaves in the crest commemorate something like the fact that a monk in the Abbey Beaufort (then Beaulieu) fed the king some strawberries when he was hungry. It is the history of the clan.

"King James I made Simon Fraser the first Lord for helping him with some campaign.

"Possibly the strawberry story didn't involve a king, but it did the abbey and monks. I read in the *National Geographic* that a French Captain Frezier discovered the fine strawberries grown by Indians in Chile and took some home in 1712. A few years later some were taken to England, *fragaria chiloensi*, they called them. These better strawberries crossed with European and American varieties and became the ancestors of modern strawberries.

"When the colonists landed in Virginia, they were amazed at the abundance and vigor of the native strawberries, *fragaria virginiana*. "We cannot set down a foote but trod on strawberries," a colonist wrote home from Maryland. This variety was taken to France. The date as given by Jean Rodin, gardener to Louis XIII, was 1624. From France it was taken to England and other European countries and extensively grown in gardens. The berries remained small, though of good flavor and more productive than the old European kinds until Captain Frezier's *fragaria chiloensi*.

"The Frasers apparently came to Inverness from France in the 1400's. I suppose if the French used the letter z, those who call themselves Frazier here long ago are right enough, but the French spell strawberries *frasies*. They say that everyone who worked on the 13,000 (present acreage) estate took the name Fraser whether or not it was strictly the surname, but all were related anyway.

"Fraser is the family name of the Lords Lovat, Barons of Inverness. There is an estate acreage of 13,000 acres. General Fraser, shot at Saratoga, was most upset as he died because he could not return to reclaim his title as Lord Lovat. The estate and seat in Parliament which had been forfeited by the family since they helped Bonnie Prince Charlie fight for his Scottish throne, and he had just regained the right.

"A whole regiment of Frasers came over to fight in the French and Indian War, and General Wolfe, who had saved Fraser as a lieutenant, fell into his arms at Quebec. For this service, various Frasers who were in the war received large grants of land as far south as South Carolina."