

THE NAME AND FAMILY OF FREER OR FREAR

Compiled by the Media Research Bureau, 1110 F Street, Washington, D.C.

The surname Freer, Frear, or Fryer is, in many cases, of English origin and derived from the official or occupative name of Friar, originally designating "one of a religious brotherhood". In some cases, however, the name of Freer is of French origin and derived from Frere, which means "brother". In both England and France the name was first taken as a patronymic by the sons of those so called. While Frere was the only spelling of the name to gain any lasting foothold in France, the early English and later American records give the name in the forms of Friar, Fryar, Freear, Freere, Frier, Friere, Freare, Frer, Freres, Frere, Fryer, Frear, and Freer. Many of these are still in evidence today, but the last three are the variants most frequently found in modern times.

Among the many early, though fragmentary, records of the name in England are those of Henry Le Frere, of County Suffolk, about the year 1212; John le Frere, son of Richard le Frere, of Eye, in 1244; Benedictus le Frere, of County Cambridge, in the year 1273; John le Frere, of County Norfolk, in 1275; Walter le Frere, of Essex, during the same period; Cecylia le Frere, of Somersetshire, in 1327; Magota nad Isabella Frere, of Yorkshire, in 1379; and Henricus or Henry Friere, of Yorkshire, in 1379.

John Frere, who was living at Thurston or Sweffling, in the County of Suffolk, about the beginning of the fourteenth century, married Anne, daughter John Thurston, and was the father by her of a son named Alexander, who was living at Swef fling in the year 1334. Alexander had issue by his wife, Joane Glenham, of two sons, John and William. John, the elder of these brothers, was the father by his wife, Joane Bampton, of Alexander Frere or Frier, living in 1394, who married a Miss Holland and had issue by her of two sons, John and Alexander.

Alexander Frere, the younger of the last-mentioned brothers, purchased land at Occold, in

Suffolk, and died about the year 1471; leaving issue by his wife, Margaret Henman, of five children, Joh, Thomas, Anneys, Margaret, and Alice. Of these, Thomas had a son named Edward by his wife, Margaret Bacon, while John married the widow Julian of Julia Margery and was the father by her of John, Thomas, Robert, Agnes, Awdrey, and Margaret. John, the eldest son of John and Julian or Julia, was married before 1530 to Agnes, daughter of John Bacon, of Hessem, and was the father by her of John, Alexander, Thomas, Valentyne, Richard, Robert, Margaret, Elizabeth, and Anne. Of these, Valentyne left issue by his wife, Agnes Norman, of numerous daughters and a son named Thomas. This son was married in 1612 to Margaret, daughter of George Harrison, of Suffolk.

John Frere, the eldest son of John and Agnes (nee Bacon), resided at Wickham Abbey, in Suffolk, and was married before 1560 to Katherine, daughter of John Rivett. To this union was born only one child, a daughter named Frances; but his second wife, Thomasine Jessop; gave him ten children: John (died young), Jane, Peter, Thomasine, Anne, John, Edward, Hester, Sara, and Thomas (died young). The eldest surviving son, Peter, married Anne Bacon and was the father of John; Margaret, Thomas, William, George, Anne, Mary, Lettice, Penelope, Susan, and Mirabel Frere. Of these, John married Elizabeth Symons before 1617 and had issue by her of John, Elizabeth, Thomas, Mary, and Robert; while George, a London merchant, with an estate in the County of Essex, had a wife named Blanche, but is believed to have died without progeny.

Of the younger sons of John and Thomasine (nee Jessop) Frere, John was married before 1606 to Anne Sandwich, by whom he had a son named John, who left issue at Finningham, Suffolk, by his wife, Elizabeth Sheppard, of several daughters and a son named John; and Edward married Joane Symond, by whom he had issue of John, Edward, and Kidby. Of these, Edward left several daughters and two sons, Edward and John.

Thomas Frier or Frere, second son of John and Julian or Julia, before mentioned, resided at Occold and was the father by his first wife, Margaret Bacon, of three children, Alexander,

George, and Margaret. By his second wife, Elizabeth Baxter, of Norfolk, he had issue of Ann, Richard, Thomas, Anthony, Mary, Grace, Thomasine, and Elizabeth. Of these, Richard resided at Harleston, in the county of Norfolk, and left issue there by his first wife, Thomasine, daughter and heir to Martin Flowerdew, of three children, Thomas, Elizabeth, and Anne. His second wife, Alice Blossse, whom he married before 1600, gave him four children, Alice, Richard, Tobias, and Anthony. Of the last—mentioned brothers, Thomas Frier or Freer left issue by his wife, Anne Wallis, of Richard, Thomas, Anthony, Anne, Alice, Tobias, Alexander, and John, of whom the last settled in Barbadoes and founded a sizable family; Tobias, a member of Parliament for Norfolk in 1653, was married in 1630 to Susanna Constable, by whom he had issue of Tobias, Alice, and Susanna; and Anthony, Rector of Mulbarton, County Norfolk, was the father by his wife, Elizabeth Hartstonge, of Anthony, Thomas, John, Robert, Mary, and Elizabeth Frier or Frere.

William Freer, of Langham, County Suffolk, who was probably descended from the before—mentioned Suffolk line, was married in the early sixteenth century to a Miss Farmor, by whom he had a son named John, who resided at Clare, in Suffolk. The last was the father of John, William, Robert, and Joanne Freer or Fryar, of whom the first married Ann Heralde, of Essex, and was the father by her of William, John, Frances, and Margaret. Of the sons, William Freer or Fryar left issue at Clare by his wife, Susan Croftes, of John, Susan, Elizabeth, Esther, and Ann; while John Freer or Fryar settled at Betcham St. Paul, County Essex, and left issue there by his wife, Elizabeth Crocherod, of four children, Edward or Edmond, John, Thomas, and Ann.

About the year 1400, if not before, Jeffrey or Geoffrey Freer (also recorded as Frere and Freere) was living in Worcestershire,

England. By his wife, Elizabeth Lyttelton or Lettelton, he had a son named Thomas, who married Margaret Wysham, heiress to Charlton, County Worcester. To this union was born

Humphrey and Freere, of Charlton, who married Anne, daughter of Richard Walsh, and was the father by her of Thomas (died young), Richard, Robert, Joan, Joyce, and Margaret. Of these, Robert married Elizabeth, daughter of John Lewes, and was the father by her of Humphrey, had issue by his wife, Margaret Henshaw, of Richard Frere, Freer, or Friar, who married Anne, daughter of Thomas Soley, before 1540. To this union were born Humphrey, Anthony, John, Richard, and Edward Freer or Friar (also recorded as Fryar), of Worcester. Of these; Humphrey married Cecily, natural daughter of Edward Grey, Lord of Powis, Shropshire, and was the father by her of Jeremy, Edward, Anne, Katherine, and Cecilie; while Richard had three children, Richard, Thomas, and Elizabeth Freer or Friar.

Among the earliest records of the family of the name in Oxfordshire, England, are those of William Freer (e) or Fryer, who was Justice of the Peace in the City of Oxford about the beginning of the sixteenth century; and Philip Freear or Fryer, who was registered at the University of Oxford in 1519. Of these, William married Agnes Reve and had three children, Edward, Henry, and Fridiswid. Edward, the elder son, left issue by his wife, Anne Bustard, of William, John, Henry, Anne, and Elizabeth Frere, Freer, or Fryer, of whom the first was married before 1574 to Mary, daughter of William Bamfield, of Dorset. To this union was born four daughters and two sons, Edward and Bamfield Frere or Fryer. The former of these sons was that Edward Freer, of Oxfordshire, who was created a Baronet in 1620, but he died ten years later, without issue.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, one John Freare or Frear was living in the County of Cambridge, England. He married a Miss Barnatt, of Kent, and had issue by her of a son, Dr. John Freare, physician to Queen Mary. Dr. John Freare married Ursula, daughter of Robert Castell, and had issue by her of Gabriel (died young), Thomas, Jerman, Reginald, Anthony, and several daughters. Dr. Thomas Freare or Frere, of London, the eldest surviving son, married Mary Shawe and was the father by her of Thomas (died young), John, Henry, William, another Thomas, and numerous daughters.

One Freer (Christian name unknown) was living in Scotland in the early seventeenth century. He had two sons, Adam and the Reverend George Freer, of whom the latter was married in 1699 to Helen Blair, of Perthshire. His children were Thomas, Frances, Adam, John, Margaret, and George, of whom the last settled and left issue in London.

Of the French Families of the name, that originally of Lyon was represented in the year 1565 by Pierre Frere, who was the father of Giraud Frere, who married Constance de Rouviere in 1583. To this union was born a son, Nicolas Frere, who was married in 1630 to Anne Poget, and had issue by her of at least one son, named Maurice.

Jean Frere, of poitou, in France, was the father of a son named Pierre, who first married Helene Ageon in 1578, was married about 1585 to Renee Trot, and in 1590 married Perrett Mallet. Pierre had, among other children, a son named Pierre by the second union, and a son named Rene by his third wife. The descendants of these brothers are numerous.

The first of the name in America was probably Thomas Fryer or Frier, who settled at Salem, Mass., in 1639, or before. He later removed to Gloucester, Mass., and Elizabeth, probably his wife, died there in 1685. No record of his descendants, if any is available.

One James Fryer or Frier was living at Cambridge, Mass., before 1640. His wife, Catharine, died in that year. It is thought probable that he was the father of Nathaniel Fryer, a mariner, who was living at Boston, Mass., before 1653. By his wife Christian, this Nathaniel was the father of James, Sarah, and Elizabeth. This family removed to Portsmouth, and the father was married at Newbury in 1679 to his second wife, Dorothy Woodbridge.

Possibly Elish "Friard", who was living in New Hampshire in 1689, was a member of the Fryer family, but records concerning him are only fragmentary.

In 1641, Robert Frere, an Englishman, settled in Warwick River County, Virginia; and in 1650 Edward Fryer, also of English descent, settled in Northumberland County Virginia.

Nothing is known of the immediate families or descendants of these early settlers in the South.

Hugo Freer, who came from the Netherlands to America about the year 1670, is said to have been descended from a French Huguenot, who left France after the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1592, and took refuge in the Netherlands. Hugo settled near the town of New Paltz, in Ulster County, N.Y. He was accompanied to this country by his wife, Mary Haye, and their three eldest children, Hugo, Abraham, and Isaac, of whom the last died at an early age. The other children of the immigrant Hugo, probably born in New York, were Jacob, Jean, Mary, and Sarah.

Hugo Freer, eldest son of the immigrant Hugo, was married in 1690 to Mary LeRoy, by whom he had issue of Hugo, Isaac, Jonas (progenitor of the family in Ohio and West Virginia), Mary, Sarah, Esther, Benjamin, Rachel, Jannette, and Elizabeth. Most of the members of this family removed to Dutchess County, N.Y., in 1715.

Abraham Freer, second son of the immigrant Hugo, married Aagien Tietsorte in the year 1694. His children were Maeltje, Hugo, Abraham, Solomon, William, Jelena, Phillipus or Philip, Sara, Maritje, Jacomyntje, Aagien, Johanna, and Catryntjen. Some of the descendants of this branch of the family settled in Illinois, while others resided at Kingston, Poughkeepsie, and other parts of New York.

Jacob Freer or Frere, son of the immigrant Hugo, was married in 1705 to Aritje Van Wagen. His children were Jannetje, Sarrajte, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (died young), Maritje, Annatje, Antjen, Jacob, Daniel, and Cornelius.

Jean Freer, the youngest son of the immigrant Hugo, was married about 1707 to Rebecca Van Wagenen. In 1720, he was living at Kingston, Jannitje, Marytje, Jacob, and Rebecca, were born.

One Friar or Frear (Christian name unknown), who is called "one of the first settlers of

Athens, N.Y.”, was the father in the year 1787 of a son named Abraham, who married Judith Bogardus and left at least one son, Edward Friar, of Athens.

Frequently engaged in education, literary, and scientific pursuits, the Freers, Frears, and Fryers of America have been known in many instances for their social presence, poise and charm, intelligence, keenness of wit, and (occasionally) executive ability.

Among those of the name who served with the Colonial forces during the American Revolution were Captain Charles Freer, of South Carolina; Colonel John Frear or Freer, of New York; Abraham, Isaac, John, and Samuel Freer, of New York; John Frier and Hendrick Frere, of New York; Richard Freir, Friar, or Fryer, of Virginia; William Frier or Fryer, of Jabez, Jeremiah, John, Richard, Stephen, and William Fryer or Fryar, of Virginia; Jacob and Michel Frear, of Pennsylvania; Samuel Freer, of Pennsylvania; William Frier, of Pennsylvania; and Andrew, George, George Jr., Hugh, James, Philip, and William Fryer, of Pennsylvania.

John, William, Henry, Alexander, Thomas, Robert, Edward, George, Richar, Anthony, Hugo, Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, and James are among the masculine Christian names frequently recurrent in the annals of the family.

Of the bearers of the name who have been prominent in America in comparatively recent times, the following are considered representative: John Fryer (b. 1839), of Kent, England, and California, educator and author. William Henry Frear (b. 1841), of New York, merchant. Romeo Hoyt Freer (b. 1847), of Ohio and West Virginia, soldier, lawyer, diplomat, and Congressman. Charles H. Freer (b. 1849), of Wisconsin and Minnesota, elocutionist, author, and poet. Frederick Warren Freer (1849-1908), of Illinois, artist. Otto Freer (1857—1932), of Illinois, Laryngologist. William Frear (b. 1860), of Pennsylvania, chemist and scientist. James A. Frear (b. 1861), of Wisconsin, Congressman. Paul Caspar Freer (b. 1862), of Illinois and Michigan, chemist, director, scientist, and author. Walter Francis Frear (b. 1863), of California and Hawaii, lawyer, jurist, governor, and banker. Eugenie Mary Fryer (b. 1879), of Pennsylvania. author. William

Davis Freer (b. 1880), of Ohio and New York, water works executive. Douglas (Henry) Fryer (b. 1891), of Connecticut and New York, author and professor of psychology.

The coat of arms ascribed to the greater number of the English families of the name of Frere, Fryer, or Freer (also spelled Freer) is described in heraldic terms as follows (Burke, General Armory, 1884): Arms.--"Sable, a chevron between three dolphins embowed naiant argent." Crest.--"Out of a ducal coronet or, an antelope's head argent, armed, crined, and tufted gold."

The families of Frere or Frere, anciently resident in Brittany and Lyon, France, bore the following coat of arms (Rietstap, Armorial General, 1934): Arms.--"Azure, an estoile argent on a chief or, a cross patee gules."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bardsley—English and Welch Surnames. 1901
Chapuy—Origine des Noms Patronymiques Francais. 1934
Burke—Dormant and Extinct Baronetage. 1844
Burke—Landed Gentry. 1875
Burke—General Armory. 1884
Burke—Family Records. 1897
Frere—Pedigree of the Family of Frere. 1899
Frere—Parentalia. 1843
Metcalf—Visitations of Suffolk. 1882
Berry—County Genealogies. 1833
Herald and Genealogist. Vol. 5, 1870
Waters—Genealogical Memoirs of the Chesters of Chicheley. Vol. 1, 1878
Phillipps—Oxford Visitations. 184—Jewitt—The Reliquary. Vol. 23. 1882—1883
Harleian Society—London Visitation. 1869
Harleian Society—Oxfordshire Visitations. 1871
Harleian Society—Essex Visitation. 1878
Harleian Society—Visitation of Worcester. 1888
Harleian Society—Shropshire Visitation. 1889
Harleian Society—Norfolk Visitations. 1891
Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica. First Series. Vol. 2. 1876
Chaix D'Est—Ange. Dictionnaire de Familles Francaises. Vol. 19, 1927
Savage—Genealogical Dictionary of New England. Vol. 2. 1860
Babson—History of Gloucester, Massachusetts. 1860
Greer—Early Virginia Immigrants. 1912
Le Fevre—History of New Paltz and Its Old Families. 1903
Le Fevre—History of New Paltz, New York. 1909
Lowther—History of Ritchie County. 1911
S. Burhans—Burhans Genealogy. 1894
Willey—Chesebrough Family. 1903
Munsell—American Ancestry. 1887. 1892
Heitman—Officers of the Continental Army. 1914
New York in the Revolution. 1901
Gwathmey—Historical Register of Virginians in the Revolution. 1938
Pennsylvania Muster Rolls. 1907
Herringshaw—American Biography. Vol. 2. 1909
Who's Who in America, 1934—1935
Rietstap—Armorial General. 1934.