

Kent,

Judith Burger is, unfortunately, deceased. Randy email has changed.

You're correct that Donnelly is the only source for James French having been from Ireland. Her books have been most unreliable and I use them only for clues—not for facts.

I also have that **James French** was transported in 1671 and agree that if he had been sent here by wealthy merchants, they would have paid for him to come and he wouldn't have arrived as an indentured servant. I believe if there'd been a reference to Ireland, it would have been stated and there's enough people researching this family that if from Ireland someone would have produced the document by now.

Thomas Notley was from Dorset, England but came to St. Mary's County and was Proprietary Governor of Maryland. He was a wealthy land owner.

Note: (1) Notley, Gerrard, Slye, and Thompson belonged to families mentioned in book "[*The Landed Gentry of England*](#)" as possessing large estates in Somerset and Dorset counties England; per the "[*The Catholic Historical Review*](#)". (2) In Thomas Notley's will he says "he is a friend of Capt. Slye and his wife Jane". James French was transported by Notley and later gave 2 court depositions on the heritage of the Slye family. (3) Notley transported James French from England to Maryland colony in 1671 with 52 other "adventurers". James French, transported by Mr. Thomas Notley, rights proved 16 February 1671.

Some of my notes on James French:

Nuncupative will of Collins Mackenzie, St. Clements, SMC 12/31/1682-1/11/1682. To: Son of **James French** (French) and dau. of Hugh Benson, personal estate. Richard Gardiner residuary legatee of estate, real and personal. Execs: Michael Taney, Abell Brown. Wit: Edward Molins, Joseph Bryant.

Note: 1) Who is Collins Mackenzie? Is there a variation of his last name? Can't find any info on him at this time. Maybe James's son Martin was married to his daughter? 2) Richard Gardiner is the father of Luke Gardiner whom James French is indentured to. This Gardiner family was from Oxfordshire England and were staunch English Catholics per "[*The Catholic Historical Review*](#)".

10/18/1700: **James French** named as overseer of the will of Thomas Cissell.

Note: 1) James French's daughter Mary was married to Thomas Cissell, an English Catholic. Mary's first husband was Robert Thompson, an English Catholic. 2) Cissell's parents were John Cissell and Mary Shireciff, both English Catholics. 3) Arthur Thompson appraised Thomas Cissell's will.

4/16/1701: Richard Chapell and **James French** were approvers of the estate of Thomas Cissell, SMC.

Note: See above on Thomas Cissell.

12/15/1701: **James French**, Martin French, John Cissell, and Nicholas Guylick witnessed the will of Arthur Thompson, SMC.

Note: 1) Arthur Thompson, son of Robert, was born in England 1630, transported to Maryland by his brother James. 2) Arthur was married to Susanna Carberry, daughter of John Baptist Carberry and Elizabeth Guibert of Yorkshire. 3) Capt. John Jordan of Somerset England later married Elizabeth Guibert. James French lived on Mr. Jordan's land before purchasing "Hopton Park" and "Wolverhampton".

7/30/1718: **James French** was listed as next of kin of Thomas Davis--how???

Note: Thomas Davis was married to Elizabeth Clouder of Lewisham, Kent, England. How do they relate to James French????

Will of **James French**, planter, SMC, 3/4/1733-3/18/1733-34. Grandson: John, Exec., 110 ac., including dwelling plantation "Hopton Park". Granddaughter: Mary, wife of John Leek, 50 ac. to be laid out on west side "Mayland". Servant: James Kirby, freedom. Grandchild: (unnamed), residue of estate. Wit.: John Thompson, James Kail, Elizabeth French. (Maryland Calendar of Wills).

Note: 1) John Thompson, son of Arthur, married to Margaret Cissell, daughter of Thomas Cissell (see above).

James French leased / possessed 100 ac. "Hopton Park" in 1707 which was patented by Cuthbert Scott, 3/23/1680 and he possessed "Wolverhampton", 150 ac. in 1707 which was patented by William Meekin, 5/3/1681. He was the administrator of Thomas Cissell in 1700; and he witnessed the will of Arthur Thompson in 1701 and Thomas Cooper in 1714.

Note: 1) Thompson family again. 2) Cuthbert Scott was married to Elizabeth Guibert, her 3rd marriage. She was previously married to Capt. John Jordan whom James French leased land from. "Hopton Park" was Elizabeth's dower to Cuthbert Scott when they married and is probably the same land James leased from Capt. Jordan in the past, later purchased "Hopton Park" from Cuthbert Scott.

John Curry left his sons Edward and John in the care of **James French** and Edward Cole (by his will in 1696).

Note: 1) Edward Cole was a land owner on St. Clement's Island and was very close to Luke Gardiner. Edward Cole was the son of Robert Cole, an English Catholic. Edward was married to Elizabeth Slye, daughter of Capt. Gerrard Slye of Warwickshire England. See court deposition Of Elizabeth Cole and James French below. 2) More research needs to be done on John Curry, as he must have trusted James and Edward to leave his sons in their care. 3) See book "*Robert Cole's world; Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland*"

You may want to check the Chancery Record itself, but this is what I have for the depositions. Neither of these depositions say anything about **James French** coming from Ireland. On 6/25/1722, **James French** gave a deposition on the birthplace and lineage of Gerard Slye and family. At that time, his age was given as about 72 which places his date of birth 1650/51.

Note: These 2 depositions are very important and shed some light on James French and his relationships. He certainly knew these people very well to be called into court to testify on their heritage. Families - Syle, Gerrard, Cole, Keech, Sewall – All were wealthy English Catholic families, all are listed in the “Catholic Historical Review” Need to check into all the persons noted. James is one of, if not the oldest person called to testify, probably some significance to that regarding heritage.

6/25/1722: Depositions taken re: the birth and lineage of Gerard Slye of SMC being the son and heir of Capt. Gerard Slye of SMC and Jane Saunders of SMC, sometime of Great Britain. Jane Saunders came to MD about 40 or 50 years ago with the then Lady Baltimore and soon afterwards married Capt. Gerard Slye. Dorothy Gale of Charles Co., widow--age about 70 stated that Mr. Massey, a priest and Mrs. Frances Rhodes (wife of Abraham Rhodes) came on the same ship about 51 years ago; she stated that Gerard Slye of Bushwood is the eldest son of Capt. Gerard Slye and his wife Jane and that there was another son named Charles Slye. Deposition of Elizabeth Mahoney of SMC, widow--age about 58 stated that her mother, Susanna Cooksey, was nursemaid to Gerard Slye. Deposition of **James FRENCH**, age about 72 & Deposition of Mrs. Elizabeth Cole of SMC, widow--age about 51 stated that she was sister to Capt. Gerard Slye by the same mother and father--to the best of her memory, she was about 7 when Capt. Gerard Slye married Miss Jane Saunders, an English Gentlewoman. Deposition of Edward Field, age about 74 heard that Jane Saunders was from Worcestershire, England and that she asked her husband to name a tract of land called "Bushwood" after the name of "Piper's Hill" in memory of land in Worcestershire where she claimed a right; Robert Slye of Bushwood (father of Capt. Gerard Slye) was married to Susanna--eldest dau. of Thomas Gerard, Esq., formerly of New Hall in Lancashire, England. Deposition of George Keith (Keech?) age, about 90. Deposition of Major Nicholas Sewall, age about 67 (son of the Lady of the Lord Baltimore) stated that Jane Saunders was big with child and while in London asked Lord Baltimore to be the godfather; she professed to be of the Church of England when first arriving in this county. Deposition of Mrs. Ann Duckworth, age about 70. Deposition of Daniel Henley, age about 70 stated that about 40 years ago, Capt. Gerard Slye and his wife Jane and their 2 sons went together from England; Thomas Gerard has 3 sons--the eldest named Justinian, then Thomas, and then John who are now dead without issue (MD Chancery Records).

JAMES FRENCH COURT DEPOSITION #2

4/12/1725: Depositions taken regarding the lineage of Gerard Slye of SMC. John Graves of SMC, age about 58 that he heard from Mrs. Elizabeth Blackistone, wife of Col. Nathaniel Blackistone who was a sister of Susanna, wife of Robert Slye, and the eldest dau. of Thomas Gerard, Esq., formerly of New Hale in Great Britain; that Susanna was

married to Col. John Coad after the death of Robert Slye; Capt. Gerard Slye of Bushwood in SMC was acknowledged to be the eldest son of Robert Slye and Susanna his wife; Justinian and Thomas Gerard died without issue and John Gerard died leaving issue--a son and a daughter who both died without issue. Thomas Sykes, age about 80 stated that it has been about 52 years since Thomas Gerard departed this life; it has been 55 years since Robert Slye died and Susanna married Col. John Coad, and about 44 years ago that she died; Robert Slye left two sons--Gerard and Robert Slye; at the time of his death, Thomas Gerard left 3 sons--Justinian, Thomas, and John Gerard. Deposition of Frances Mills of St. Mary's Co., age about 50 that Gerard Slye of Bushwood, SMC now living, is the eldest son and heir of Capt. Gerard Slye of the same place who was the eldest son of Robert and Susanna Slye. Deposition of Daniel Henley, planter, age about 74, Deposition of **James French**, age about 74 & Deposition of Elizabeth Cole, age about 57 that Capt. Gerard Slye, her brother, was the eldest son of her father Robert Slye by Susanna, her mother, and that Thomas Gerard was her grandfather

James French was born 1650/51. He was transported to MD at the age of 21 in 1671 by Thomas Notley. According to the inventory of Luke Gardiner in 1674, **James French** was one of his servants on St. Clement's Island.

My note to the list, 2/3/2003 regarding Martin French and his family:

On 6/25/1722, **James French** gave a deposition on the birth and lineage of Gerard Slye. At that time, his age was given as about 72 which places his date of birth ca 1650. His father would have been born prior to 1630. His grandfather would have been born prior to 1610. (Rarely have I ever found men marrying prior to the age of 20).

So, if **Martin French** (Tribes of Galway) was supposed to be the father of **James French** of SMC, he would have been at least 107 at the time he made his will in 1737 and Martin French, the grandfather would have been 127. Obviously, this won't work.

Ms. Donnelly claims that the wife of **James French** was Elizabeth Meakins, daughter of William Meakins and Elizabeth Beard. Does anyone have anything to substantiate that? I believe she based this on the fact that William Meakins patented "Woverhampton", 150 ac. in Newtown 100, 5/3/1681 which was possessed by **James French** in 1707. Land was sometimes sold, not always inherited! I find no proof that the wife of **James French** was Elizabeth Meakins!

Judith, Randy, and Linda

Do any of you have access the the book Colonial Settlers St. Clements Bay 1634-1780 St. Mary's County, Maryland. Mary Louise Donnelly. Ennis, Texas: 1996?

My oldest ancestor James French (my mother is a French) was said to have come from Galway Ireland in 1671 to St. Mary's county. I have heard that the book has him being

from Ireland but have not been able to document that with *hard facts* anywhere else. It seems to me that the book reference is the only mention of James being from Galway. If James French is in the book is there any documentation or footnote? I started to hear this "story" of James ancestry around 1996, the same time that the book was published (**325 years after James French arrived in Maryland!!!!**). Needless to say that I am starting to question it.

I have seen where James French was transported out of England by Thomas Notley of Dorset, England in 1671. In fact after reviewing the connections that James has in both England and on St. Clements's Island I am of the opinion that James and the other 52 "adventurers" transported out of England by Notley 1671 were *hand picked by the Catholic gentry that flourished there* (Surnames: Gerrard, Slye, Cole, Hatton, Thompson, Gardiner, Cissell). These wealthy individuals had a great deal of money at stake in their ventures and *no doubt wanted men they knew and could trust*. The fact that Notley uses the term "adventurers" to describe the transported lot is telling in itself. These men were not convicts, political prisoners, petty thieves, or common indentured servants.

I also have seen where James was a servant to Luke Gardiner in 1674. Both of these facts lead me to question James's Irish heritage. The family "tradition" was that James French was sent to America from the wealthy merchants of Galway (tribes of Galway) to manage lands. It seems to me if he were wealthy land holder he would not arrive in 1671 as an indentured servant. All of the evidence, wills, land records, and court depositions that are attributed to James seem to point to him being from England and he seems to be tied to powerful English Catholic Families. I believe what has happened is what I would call reverse Genealogy. Someone had knowledge of the "Tribes of Galway" and French's of this region; they had a 1st name of James, and a general French surname history. With this someone has tried to tie James to these Galway French's. I even went as far as to contact a local Galway certified genealogist to (1)prove that James was from this Galway line and (2) to see if there was a James born circa 1650 that could have been our ancestor. I struck out emphatically on both counts. I was told that no such James French existed that was born in that time frame (+ / - 5 years) and that Researchers in Galway see this stuff all the time – a bogus genealogy that is passed down the generations. As expected, she said because of their popularity they have most of their problems with the surnames in the "tribes of Galway", as most people attempt to connect to these families out of romanticism. I believe this is exactly what happened with my French line.

Any help would be greatly appreciated. If you can't answer please feel free to pass this email on to someone else. Thanks for your time and help.

Sincerely,

Kent Walker