

Hugh Beruby in 1337

This article, published in *Le Monde Berrubey* for the summer of 2012 (vol. 24 no 3), presented this Hugh while recalling that our first ancestor of America, Damian Berruby (1647-1688), was a mason. It is possible that an earlier ancestor who had come to France from England arrived in the years 1420-1450 among many masons who came, during the English occupation of Rouen, to repair some damaged buildings and churches or to build new ones in the name of the King of England, who aimed to become King of France.

In 1337, Hugh was living in North Wales, on the large Anglesey Island. There we find the *Beaumaris Castle*, named by the Normans living in England (meaning *beaux marais* in French, a nice marsh). It was built starting in 1295 but was never fully completed. I found that Hugh Beruby owned there, following a document of the time, three acres of land near the *hamel*, a hamlet located beside the castle.

Starting a campaign in 1277, King Edward I finished his invasion of Wales in the spring of 1283. It's since that time that the older son of the king is titled Prince of Wales (Charles at the moment). The Welsh had to flee from Beaumaris where the king brought many masons, Englishmen but also Frenchmen. It is a good bet that Hugh (Hughes in French) Beruby was a mason or a mason's son, one of those French speaking Anglo-Norman that were called *Franceys* by the Anglo-Saxons. Furthermore, he lived during a hard period marked by the plague that hit Europe in 1348-49, killing from 20 to 50 % of the population from one region to another.

I believe that the masons brought there were recruited in different places throughout England. At the same time, we see names like Kirkeby or Crosseby on a list, names we find mostly in Yorkshire, where some people named Beruby also lived. The castles built under Edward I were all in South Wales at the beginning and Beaumaris Castle was the last one, being in the north. So, I'm left with some doubts on Hugh's origins. In more recent times, I found a wedding involving at Wrexham, North Wales, Joseph Berube in 1919. He may have been related to another Berube, Owen, born in 1869 in Montgomeryshire, more to the center of Wales. In the north of England, we find other Berubes in West Yorkshire, in registers reporting baptisms, marriages and burials that occurred before 1812: Sibella and William, Richard Berube's children, Margaret Berube, Richard Hoyle spouse, Isabell, William Berube's daughter, Thomas Berube and Elizabeth, John Berube's daughter. In this area, there was near Leeds a borough named Barrowby, which was known as Beruby in the Middle Age. There are many traces of this Beruby village, some I found for the years 1315, 1375 and 1388-89, as well as some individuals of that period named Beruby.

Nevertheless, we can't exclude the possibility that those Berubes, with an « e » instead of a « y », were from the Midlands, descending for instance from people closed to the Zouche noble family, like John Berwby, the testament executor of Lord Richard La Zouche in 1397. Hugh could come from the center (Northamptonshire) as well as the north of England. We can't be sure for now. If there were masons among his descendants, there are chances that our own origins have something to do with Beaumaris. A master-mason working there could have been moved to Rouen at the time of the occupation, after 1420, while finalizing the Beaumaris Castle was no more a priority. If we speak here of a *Norman* from England, it would not be a surprise if he chose himself, or one of his sons, to remain at Rouen after 1450, when the city was part of France again.

After building castles in England, to protect their possessions, the Norman invaders, later called Anglo-Normans, did the same in South Wales, for instance at Pembroke, showing their power to the Welsh and later, in North Wales, including Beaumaris. Such fortifications are also found in Ireland, like the John Lackland's Castle at Limerick (his real name was Jean Sans Terre and he didn't speak a word of English) or the great Norman castle of Trim, at the north-west of Dublin, not including many fortified houses belonging to local Anglo-Norman lords.

William Marshal (his real name was Guillaume Maréchal) was count of Pembroke before 1219, after marrying Isabel de Clare (1172-1220), Strongbow's daughter (his real name was *Arc-Fort*, also a French one) Richard de Clare. After his return from a crusade, Maréchal improved the Pembroke Castle and many others after. It is said that the techniques in use were inspired by what had been seen in the Holy Land. The crusaders had fought against many fortified cities, for instance Nicaea or Antioch, around 1090, before getting to Jerusalem. There they had to face walls built from tailored stones, walls that were much more sophisticated than the first wooden forts built in England by the Normans.

Most important of all is to remember that some Berubys from England were already masons long before our family name appeared in Upper Normandy, around Rouen.

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