

Lawrence Marr, Sr. of New Jersey and Pennsylvania

Lawrence Marr Sr is presumed to be of Irish descent based on YDNA testing of several male descendants. There are a number of proposed 'origin' stories, none of which have any known support. There are no known records to support who Lawrence's parents were and no candidates are found anywhere Lawrence is known to have lived. Published genealogies by such as the western Marr Claim Association have no support at all.

A man we can presume is Lawrence Marr, Sr. is first found in United States records in May 1733 as a witness on a deed in Upper Freehold, Monmouth County, New Jersey. It was required that a witness be at least 18 years of age and knowledgeable of such transactions. No other records have been found in that location.

Based on YDNA evidence and knowing he must have been at least 18 years old in May 1733, we can speculate that Lawrence came from Ireland to the United States with what has been called the second wave of immigrants who came from the north of Ireland. This wave began about 1724 with more arrivals being seen in Delaware, and at Newcastle and Philadelphia, both accessed via the Delaware Bay and all within the Province of Pennsylvania. By 1730, this wave was spent but upwards of 5,000 had come to the United States from Ireland and most from the northern parts. See "Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718-1775", R. J. Dickson.

The above information, and the suspected date of birth of Lawrence's oldest son, Thomas, in about 1739, suggests a birthdate for Lawrence circa 1712. It seems likely he married in about 1738 in New Jersey, although no record of a marriage or of his wife has been found. There is no evidence known to support the myriad of ancestry trees claiming a name for Lawrence's wife.

From "*A History of East Amwell, 1700-1800*", we learn Lawrence Marr was living in Amwell Twp, Hunterdon County, New Jersey in 1735. His blacksmith shop is noted as being located next to the Dawlis mill. Lawrence is also found over many years in various records of Amwell.

In an agreement dated 16 Nov 1743, Hermanus Dahles/Dawlis agrees to convey 3 acres to Lawrence Marr, blacksmith. Once Lawrence paid Dawlis a specified amount, Dawlis would execute a deed for the 3 acres. The old Amwell mill was situated on that plot. Dawlis died before Lawrence had paid the money and Dawlis' widow, Catherine, signed a similar agreement with Lawrence on 14 June 1748.

On 18 July 1748, Johannes Shaver granted Lawrence 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres containing a grist mill, pools, dams, water courses, etc. Lawrence deeded that same acreage to Jeromes Horn on 1 Oct 1749. Lawrence is also a witness on the will of John Mullen of Amwell, signed 6 Jul 1747 and proved 11 Aug 1749. In 1753, Lawrence buys a mill and land in Amwell Twp.

In several court actions occurring at Trenton, seat of Hunterdon County, we find Lawrence dealing with unpaid debts. In May 1756, he is in court concerning a debt owed to Martin Tagen. Because of circumstances, Lawrence is ordered arrested and detained until the next court session in Oct 1756. From May 1-22, 1756, Lawrence is held in jail at Trenton by the High Sheriff, Benjamin Biles. In subsequent court session minutes, Lawrence is noted to have 'escaped'. It's not clear but it appears Martin Tagen bore some responsibility and was ordered to reimburse the Sheriff for some costs associated with the issue. Lawrence appears at the October 1756 session of Trenton-Inferior Court of Common Pleas, where Martin Tagen is awarded thirty-five pounds Seventeen Shillings and Six pence Lawful money of the province as debt owed by Lawrence Marr, also five pounds Ten Shillings and Seven pence proclamation

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money for damages due to non-payment. It appears the debt was resolved as no further reference to the matter was found.

In the February 1757 Term of Inferior Common Pleas Court, Lawrence Marr of Amwell, Blacksmith, was summoned to answer Robert Smith, executor of the last will of Benjamin Smith deceased for the sum of \$20.0.0 current proclamation money which he had altogether refused to pay. Related Court notes occurred on Nov 1757 – Executors of Ben Smith v Lawrence Marr, and 18 Apr 1758 – Executors of Ben Smith v Lawrence Marr.

In the same court in 1760, Aaron Doud, attorney for Lawrence Marr, summons Samuel Johnson, Esq. to render \$50 proclamation money which he has owed Marr since 8 Feb 1757. The court awarded Lawrence a judgment for the full amount plus \$5.15 "for damages he that sustained by occasion of the detaining the debt." Judgment was awarded 22 Feb 1761. Lawrence is not present at those sessions so we can presume he has left the area.

In support of the idea that he left Amwell sometime after the April 1758 court session, we find that Lawrence Marr signs a petition, as a local inhabitant, to renew the tavern license of Robert Paterson in Oxford, Sussex, New Jersey. Oxford is about 30 miles north of Amwell.

In *The Historical Directory of Sussex County, NJ*, there is this relevant information:

"In the year 1735 three brothers named Green came and settled in that part of Greenwich now known as Oxford township. They were soon followed by the McKees McMurtrees Stewarts Hulls Swayzes and others most of whom were Scotch Irish Presbyterians. Here as a consequence the first Presbyterian Church of the county was erected in the year 1744. The celebrated David Brainerd whose missionary labors among the Indians often called him to this vicinity subsequently preached in this church. For some time he lived at a place now known as Lower Mount Bethel about five miles from Belvidere."

Not long after we find Lawrence in Oxford, he removes further north to Mount Bethel, Northampton, Pennsylvania, the former home of the preacher, David Brainerd, whom Lawrence may well have known in Oxford.

A tax list from Jan 1761 is earliest available for Northampton County and Lorenz Marr was assessed that year for \$9.0.4. His son William Marr, was also taxed; as a single man.

Lawrence is noted in two law suits on the docket of March 1762 in Northampton County, Pennsylvania, in which he is cited for owing money he refuses to pay and in both cases the sheriff was instructed, on 24 Dec 1761, to take "Lawrence Marr if he may be found within your bailiwick and him safely keep so that you may have his body before our Justices at Easton the 15th day of March next to answer... the charges."

Lawrence's name, variously spelled Lorange, Lorentz, Lorence, continued on the assessment rolls through the year 1773. Although no return has been found for 1774, there was a petition issued in September with his name.

Although his name appears on Mt. Bethel tax lists for many years, there are no recorded grantee or grantor deed or mortgages in Northampton County. Wheeler theorizes Lawrence was a "squatter" as on 10 Oct 1764, he paid a special tax of \$7.0.7 on 250 acres of un-deeded lands.

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As Wheeler tells us, the last official entry for Lawrence Marr Sr. was 27 Nov 1777, when he took the Oath of Allegiance from Benjamin Depue, Esq. The oath was required by the Test Act passed by the General Assembly of Pennsylvania in June 1777 which required all male inhabitants over 18 to prove their loyalty to the new government by swearing before a Justice of Peace. He then received a certificate to show on demand the proof of Loyalty. This was a significant act on Lawrence Sr's part as his son, Lawrence Jr had, 1 Nov 1777, enlisted in Colonel Joseph Barton's Fifth Battalion of New Jersey Volunteers, a Loyalist Brigade. Lawrence Jr. and eleven other Mt. Bethel men had "gone over to the enemy" and were attainted of high treason by the Supreme Executive Council, 14 Jun 1778.

Lawrence is not recorded in the 1790 Federal census taken as of August 2 and is presumed deceased before that date.

Note:

There are other Marr families in the early United States but none can be connected to Lawrence Marr Sr. From Harriett Marr Wheeler's two books, one about Lawrence's son William and the other about Lawrence's son Lawrence Jr., we know that "Extant records of the 1700s disclose that immigrants by name of Marr, Marrs, Mar, and Mars had early arrived in the colonies of Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Maine but, as far as known, there is no evidence to prove kinship. Descendants of these miscellaneous Marrs have over and over repeated the legend that their ancestor not only had royal connections but also had a great fortune in lands and money which was awaiting all who could assemble a provable pedigree. In the mid-1800s several Marr claim associations were organized and money collected for the purpose of investigating this hoped-for bonanza." None of those efforts was successful in demonstrating any connection to royalty; all claims were denied by the courts in England and Scotland.

This author examined British royal lineage records and other reliable publications and also found no connection. That research is documented at:

<https://moodyhowellfamilyhistory.com/marr/Marr-Claim-Associations.pdf>