

The Margeson Family Crest and the Origin of the Name

Report on a section of Descendants of Thomas Margeson: Our Family History (1970s family history book).

Book pages: pp. 3-5, 102. Topics: Family history; surname origins.

The opening pages of the Margeson family history ask what a surname signifies and how the family came by the name Margeson. Family names came into common use in England about a thousand years ago, and the book notes that middle names did not become common in America until about 1870. As an example of a mother's name surviving, Laura Margeson Allen kept Margeson as her middle name, and it is still engraved on her grave marker in Nondaga Cemetery at Bath, New York.

The book quotes Frances Cowles, who wrote 'Know Your Ancestors' for the McClure Newspaper Syndicate in 1915. Cowles held that Margeson and Margesson are probably contractions of Margerison, meaning 'son of Marjory' or 'son of Margaret.' Related forms include Margetts, Margetson, Maggs and Magson. She also reported that the Margessons of Offington, Sussex, claimed descent from the French family d'Argenson, but she and many genealogists considered that derivation fanciful. The Margetsons of Yorkshire made a similar claim.

Cowles noted that the first American of the name came on the Mayflower in 1620 and died unmarried, so the name was brought to the country to stay by way of Canada. She named Gideon Margeson, a Loyalist at Annapolis, Nova Scotia, who married Lavinia, daughter of Robert Wilson of New York. The History of Annapolis called him an emigrant of 1774 from Yorkshire. Their seven children were John, Robert, Silas, Lavinia, Thomas, Peter and Christopher.

Later in the book the editor says his research in England, including letters to government bureaus and professional genealogists in the north of England, produced little. The family crest appears in a photostat opposite page 3. The old Margeson motto quoted in the dedication is 'Loyalty Me Lie,' meaning loyalty binds me.

This report is a summary written for Holden's Archive (holdens-archive.org) from the family history book. Names, dates and places follow the book as printed; the book's OCR text contains some unclear figures, so verify key facts against the original.