

The Michaux Connection

French Huguenot Settlements of Rappahannock River

Old Culpeper and the banks of the Rapidan River in the Virginia Colony

Suzanne Rochet Micheaux was the youngest of the three daughters of Jean Rochet to be smuggled out of La Rochelle, France, to Amsterdam after the Edict of Nantes took its toll in 1685. She, her two sisters, a cousin and her baby were trying to escape when the baby began to cry and the guards were alerted and able to locate the stowed away young women. The three Rochet sisters were returned to their father with the French Huguenot Church insisting upon a firm and comprehensive stance to the daughter's education. Jean Rochet feared the children as they were, would be removed from his home and sent to live within the Convent as Nuns.

It would not be until shortly thereafter that the two oldest daughters escaped to Amsterdam. Suzanne was not among them as she was deemed too young to depart leaving her in France with the Church until they could send for her and protect her safety more effectively. After many failed attempts to extract Suzanne from France, a scheme was hatched for her to stow away aboard a friendly shipping vessel in casks, She was soon reunited with her father and sisters in Amsterdam.

Suzanne Rochet Michaux is still known today in the annuals of French Huguenot history as "Little Nightcap."

Susanne Rochet and Abraham Michaux were both born in Ardennes, France. In the 16th and first half of the 17th centuries, this area of France was an independent country called Principaute de Sedan ruled by a Calvinist prince and the residents were Calvinist Protestants. After the Kingdom of France annexed Sedan in 1649, King Henry IV enacted the Edict of Nantes to provide some protection from overt persecution by Catholics. Protestants remained in the walled town of La Rochelle, a Protestant stronghold, there was a city gate that was dedicated to a former French monarch, King Hugo. It was rumored that the ghost of King Hugo wandered the gate at night. The Protestants held their revival meetings under Hugo's gate, because the Catholics feared Hugo's spirit by not going to the gate, or near to harass the Protestants. For this reason, French Catholics called their Protestant countrymen "Huguenots." In 1685, King Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes and thereby outlawed Protestantism. Many Huguenots avoided persecution or murder by fleeing through the Ardennes forests to Holland. Susanne's two older sisters had successfully escaped France and were living in Amsterdam where Protestant friends had generously received them. Susanne's father, Jean, was

determined to send his third daughter out of France as well. Susanne's two sisters wrote to their father from Amsterdam to send their little sister to them, but fearing that their letters might fall into the hands of enemies of the Huguenots, they asked him to send "the little nightcap" they had left behind.

After several unsuccessful attempts, their father arranged to have Susanne shipped in a large cask, or hogshead, which he entrusted to a friendly sea captain. The captain placed the cask onboard his ship and set sail. When they were safely past the harbor guards, he opened the cask and lifted Susanne out of her narrow, dark chamber. She made it safely to Amsterdam, where her sisters received her with great joy.

This story is not just a treasured family tale: it is an iconic story among the sum of French Huguenot descendants that feel it represents what they all suffered at the hands of French Catholics. There were many sacrifices and these men, women and children went to great lengths to escape religious intolerance.

Holland was a very tolerant nation that hosted large Huguenot communities. In Amsterdam, Susanne met another Huguenot refugee named Abraham Michaux, and the two married in 1692. The family lived together in Amsterdam, where their son Jacob Michaux (1695-1745) was born, until 1702 when they immigrated to Virginia. Abraham and Susanne had many children. Today there are hundreds of Michaux descendants alive who know the story of "the Little Nightcap" very well! The Michaux family has proven our lineage to Abraham Michaux for membership in the National Huguenot Society. Abraham Michaux was a well favored and classically trained Medical Doctor vital to his community before leaving France and certain in the Colony of Virginia.

Suzanne would marry Abraham Michaux on 13 Jul 1692 in the French Church of Amsterdam and on 20 August 1702, Suzanne Rochet Michaux became a member of the Huguenot Church of Treadneedle Street, London. The couple would then secure passage to the Colony of Virginia. They arrived to the French Huguenot Rappahannock settlements of the Colony of Virginia. Today, this area of Manakin-Sabot is an area which encompassed the outlying areas of Richmond and well populated with other French and Irish speakers. The stories were passed onto her grandchildren, then theirs and so on and is corroborated within the written records of France, England, Holland and Virginia. I came to this information through an article written by Carol Whitehead, a descendant of this line and holder of vast information on the Michaux family. I match a female descendant via the Ancestry

DNA autosomal test. I was able to reconstruct the linking lineages through her information related to Darby Quin, whom had been and enigma to all of the various lines of Quinn and their descendants for generations. I cannot say exactly how Laughlin fits into this genealogy in specificity within the written records, but now know without a question of a doubt to which genetic line of Quin men I am descended from.

Abraham and Suzanne went onto bring forth many children into this world. I list them here in no particular order.

Abraham Michaux Jr.

Anne Madeline nee Michaux Woodson

Jeanne Magdelaine nee Michaux LeGrande

Susannah nee Michaux Quinn

Jacob Michaux

Isaac Michaux

Jaques Michaux

Esther Mary nee Michaux Cunningham

Olive Judith nee Michaux Morgan born in Amsterdam 13 April 1698

Elizabeth nee Michaux Epperson

John Paul Michaux

Elizabeth nee Michaux Tucker

