

## History of the Morency Surname

The etymological origin of the name has never been found, and no one on record has ever been named Morency in the past. However, there is this one and only one toponymical landmark known as "Mount Morency" located some 10 miles North of Paris in France that bears the name. It has baffled researchers as to where this given name came from, what it referred to and how far back in time this hillock was thus named Morency. To date, it is still unknown.

Nonetheless, back during the tenth century, when France was engaged in many wars, there was an important victory of France over Germany in 978. As a reward, the French army commander, Baron Bouchard the First, was elevated by the King to the nobility of Duke and was granted a large duchy which bore the name Montmorency after the hillock which was part of the domain. Tradition has it, whenever a duchy is granted, the surname of the new Duke changes and becomes the name of the duchy; thus Duke Bouchard the First de (of) Montmorency. The surname continued to pass on to all family members and descendants in line at the Montmorency domain.

After the great expeditions of Jacques Cartier to North America from 1534 to 1541, a half century elapsed before the French became interested again in the new continent. Samuel de Champlain, the geographer of King Henry IV, set out in 1603 on the first of many voyages, sailing up the Saint Lawrence River, and returning to France to inform the King of the economic opportunities and strategic importance of the area. Thus began 50 years of French exploration, development and trade in New France.

With the need to populate and develop the new territory, the King awarded land grants to meritorious citizens willing to immigrate to New France. Most of those who immigrated were peasant farmers who worked as serfs on the feudal domains of their respective lords. However, if they elected to immigrate, they would own their grants by royal mandate if they remained in New France and farmed the land for at least three years.

As time passed, New France began to be referred to as "kanata" (Canada) from an Iroquois word meaning village/settlement and used when referring to the area. In 1608, Samuel de Champlain established the French settlement called Kebec (Quebec), an Algonquin name that means "where the river narrows", and now one of the oldest cities in North America.

The earliest record of the Morency family in France is that of Didier Baucher who was living on the Montmorency domain of the Val d'Oise Department in the Ile de France Region 9.5 miles north of Paris. We only know of his son, Antoine Baucher dit (also known as) Montmorency, the father of Guillaume, who elected to immigrate to New France in 1653.

Since most of the shipping activity was at the port of Honfleur, we can safely assume that Guillaume set out on a ship from this port. Upon his arrival he settled on the land grant that was awarded him at the Ste Famille Parish on the Ile d'Orleans on the St. Lawrence River across from Quebec. Thus, Guillaume becomes the first generation of Morencys in North America, the genealogical lineage of which is described on this website.

As to when others from the domain of Montmorency left France, it began with the French Revolution of 1789-1799 which brought about the end of all monarchists, including the de Montmorencys, whose survivors changed their surname to Morancy to avoid execution. Some left France and became large plantation owners in the New World, particularly in French St. Domingue, today known as Haiti, and in the United States at Milliken's Bend, LA, where they used large numbers of slaves imported from Africa. Since it was the custom to take on the name of their owners, the slaves became Morancys and today some African-American Morancy descendants can still be found in parts of the United States, Canada and in Europe. Many of the Morancys changed their name to Morency.

Through the years, our patronymic name evolved into many spelling variants of which Morenci, Morancey, Morance, Moranci, and Morensee are but a few. Still, what has differentiated us from the others up until at least the tenth generation has been our predominantly French sounding first names.