

Bellassise en Aquitaine

Belasis was a prominent Norman family in the north east of England in the 12th century, at the time of Henry II. Henry controlled all of Normandy, Anjou and Aquitaine with his son Richard the Lionheart maintaining order in the south; in particular the region of Bordeaux in Aquitaine.

When Richard became King, his brother John was given control of Aquitaine. Richard famously went crusading and ruled for only ten years. The crown passed to John, who lost all those territories that are now part of France. It is possible that one of the Belasis family, referred to as Belasise in the 13th century, assisted Richard in Aquitaine and chose to remain after John's loss. This supposition is based upon two facts: first, the family married into two Norman families about this time, the Talbois and De La Haye; secondly, in the 14th century, Sir John Belasyse was commanded to lead a crusade. Both of these facts imply that the Belasise had some involvement on the continent going back to the period of Richard the Lionheart.

In the 1980's there was a meeting between Mary Maxwell-Lawford (née Bellasis) and the Comte de Bellassise from Bordeaux. He was reluctant to admit to a link with the English, but history alludes to something different. The Comte de Bellassise claimed that his family history went back to the 15th century, but this analysis, albeit rather suppositious, may provide further depth.

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