

RECORDS RELATING TO THE VAN METRE, DUBOIS,
SHEPHERD, HITE AND ALLIED FAMILIES.



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In the latter part of the 17th century French Huguenot refugees together with a number of Dutch families from the Netherlands, and some palatines from the German provinces, came to America, and arriving at various points in the vicinity of Manhattan, ultimately found their way up the North river to the lowlands south of the Catskill mountains, 80 odd miles above the Bay. Here in the little fertile valleys watered by the Walkill and the Eusopus; comprising in area, not more than 3000 acres, and running a few miles into the interior, these pioneers founded five small settlements, collectively, called the New Paultz region, but made up of the individual villages of Esopus, Marbletown, Hurly, Kingston and New Paltz.

These pilgrims driven from their home beyond the sea by a common religious persecution that was then devastating their native land, found a safe and permanent abiding place on the Hudson.

'As a result of the peaceful communal intercourse while in those little Ulster county valleys, they soon forgot social and religious differences; became further united by intermarriage and with its resultant kinship, and harmonious social and business relations; the end of a generation found the two types happily blended, until, at this time by mutual agreement, the Dutch language was spoken only in the domestic circles, while the French tongue served for public use in business, educational and religious intercourse.

Among the French exiles who came were the families of du Bois, Le Fevre, Ferree, Deyou, Vernoy, Hasbroque; some of the Dutch surnames were Jansen, Etten, Bogard, Paaling, Wynkoop, Ten Brock, Gerritsen, Van Meteren, and so on. All these names under the conditions I have named, underwent same change and many came to be written with a radical variation from the original. Take, for instance: Joost Janz Van Meteren (i. e. of Meteren—so-called, from the village of Meteren, a short distance southwest of Buren in the province of Gelderland, in Holland), whose name has been variously written or expressed in these forms: Van Meteren, Van Metre, Van Meter, La Meeter, Lameeter, La Maetre, La Maitre, de la Meter, &c., &c., and that of Dubois, as: D'boy, Debois, Di-bois, Deboys, du Bois, Duboy, and so on. This explanation will answer for a host of others of the first settlers whose spelling of the family name today may hardly be identified with the original.

In the church registers of Kingston, to which place it was the custom of parents to take their children for baptism before they were a month old, the names were written by different pastors who officiated from time to time, each of whom spelled and wrote the surnames as he thought proper.

The earliest records relating to the Van Metre family in Ulster county, N. Y., are those taken from the marriage and baptismal registers of the church at Kingston; to-wit:

Abraham La Matre, j. m. of Midwound (Flatbush, L. I.), resid. in Kingston, and Ceeltje Vernoy, j. d., from the Esopus. m. 17th. June, 1682.

Joost Jan., j. m. of Meteren, in Gelderland, resid. in Marbletown,

and Sara du Bois, j. d. resid. in the Nieuw Pals (New Paltz), m. in the Paltz, 12 Dec. 1682.

Jacobus le Maitre, j. m. b. in Nieuw Haarlem, and Geertje Elenteen (Elten), j. d. b. in Schenecktede, m. 23d Sept. 1688.

It is not unlikely that these three men were kinsmen, altho' the surnames vary and hailing from different localities, they seem to have converged here and settled among their kindred. The baptismal record of their children is as follows:—

Issue of Abraham and Ceeltje (Vernoy) La Matre: Comelis, b. 1683; Susannah, b. 1685; Johannes, b. 1688; Isaac (?), b. 1689; —by Elsje Tappan, 2d wife: Ariantje, b. 1694; Johannes, b. 1697; David, b. 1701; Jacobus, b. 1705; and Abraham, b. 1707.

Issue of Joost Jan and Sara (du Bois) Van Metren: Jan, b. 1683; Rebekka, b. 1686; and Lysbeth, b. 1689.

Issue of Jacobus and Geertje (Elten) La Maitre: Isaac, b. 1694; Martha, b. 1696; Jacobus, b. 1699; Marten, b. 1701; Bata, b. 1703; Hester, b. 1706; and Jannetje, b. 1711.

It is possible that other children may have been born in these families between the baptismal periods recited, if so, their names do not appear upon the register. In the record of the baptism of Joost Jan's children, his name, as one of the parents, is written as: Joost Jans, Joosten J. Van Meteren, and

Jooste Jansen; while that of his wife: Sara du Bois—remains unchanged. The name of du Bois appears twice among the sponsors of the children, while none of the name of Van or La Metre occur in any form, as might be expected if the Van Metres and La Metres *et als* were related; but, on the contrary appear other names, which prompt a query,—could not Joost Janz have been the son of Jan Joosten? I find the custom obtained here, of transposing names, as it did more extensively, perhaps, among the Welsh!

Jan Joosten and his wife Macyken Hendrickse, were sponsors to Joost Jan's first child: Jan, along with Jacob du Bois, the next older brother of Joost Jan's wife Sara. Jan Joosten and his wife were sponsors also, to Joost Adriansen's child; Jannetje, bap. 1672; and again in 1682,—for another child, Sara, the dau. of Joost Ad-

rian. This Jan Joosten was evidently a man of prominence in the religious community, as may be inferred from the fact, that Thomas Cook—in January, and a dau. of Thomas Garton, in February, 1682,—were “Baptised at Jan Joosten’s in the presence of the whole Consistory.” Joost Adrian may have been a son of Jan Joosten. His wife’s name was Lysbeth Willem—se. Joost Jan’s first and third child was named respectively, Jan and Lysbeth, a safe inference is that they may have been named for Jan Joosten and Lysbeth Willemsse.

After the birth of Lysbeth in 1689, Joost Jans’ name seems to have dropped from the record; it reappears again along with his wife Sara’s at the baptism of Rebecca (Van Meteren) Elten’s child Zara, 6th Febr., 1715, when they were sponsors. Rebecca m. Cornelis Elten in Sept. 1704, this couple had nine children by the end of the year 1728, and nowhere among the sponsors of any of these children, occurs the name of Joost Jan, except in the instance noted.

There appears to be no mention either, of the marriage of Jan, Jr., or of Lysbeth Van Meteren, upon the Kingston records.

It is possible that this Joost Jans came to be known later as John Van Meter, of Berkeley county, Va., the Indian trader who first trod the Valley of Virginia with the Delaware Indians between 1724-1730; and who, according to various writers, as well as by tradition, was credited with being so well pleased with that country, that upon his return to New York in 1725, “he settled his boys there.”

It was in 1714 that John and Isaac Van Metre, Jacob and Sarah du Bois (the sister of Jacob du Bois and probably the wife of John Van Metre,) came to Salem, N. J., from Ulster county, N. Y., and took possession of 1600 acres of land located on Alloway’s Creek, which they had purchased of Daniel Coxe of Burlington, N. J., agent of the West Jersey Proprietors. In 1716, John and Isaac Van Meter, and Sara du Bois sold their portion of the above tract (i. e. 1200 acres) to Jacob du Bois, who remaining settled at Pilesgrove. Isaac Van Meter remained also in Salem county, and while here married: circa 1717; Annetje (Ann or Hannah), dau. of

Gerritt and Helena (Folker-Elten) Wynkoop, of Moreland Township, Pa.

John Van Meter and Sara du Bois, after the sale of the above land disappear from our view as far as New Jersey is concerned; they probably returned to New York—temporarily at least, and went out with one of the family groups migrating to other parts.

Isaac and Hannah Van Metre continued to reside in Salem county. They are prominently mentioned in connection with the organization of Pilesgrove church, their names appearing in the covenant roll in 1741, also the names of their elder children Henry and Sarah. Henry the son, *m.* in 1744, his cousin Rebecca du Bois, dau. of Isaac du Bois of Perkiomen, Pa. The dau. Sarah *m.* John Richman; both of whom: Henry and Sarah and their families—removed afterward to Virginia.

Jacob Dubois the grantee of the Van Metre tract in 1716 *m.* circa, 1690, Gerritje Gerritsen probably at Kingston. She was the sister of Tryntje Gerritsen, wife of Solomon du Bois—the brothers having married sisters. Solomon was the father of Isaac who settled on his father's lands at Perkiomen and died there in 1729, leaving five daughters. The children of Jacob du Bois of Salem, most of whom were born in New York, were: Magdalena, Barent, Louis, Geeritje, Sarah, Isaac, Gerritt, Catharine, Rebecca, Neeltje and Johannes. Brent *m.* in 1715, his cousin Jacomyntje, dau. of Solomon du Bois, of Kingston; Louis *m.* 1718, Jannetje, Van Vlied, and Gerritt *m.* Margerat — — —. When Jacob their father, divided his lands at Pilesgrove, in 1733, into four equal parts, the above sons received each his respective fourth interest, and settled upon their lands. In the church covenant which I have referred to,—of 1741—are found among the signers thereto, these names: Isaac Van Metre, his wife Hannah; their children Henry and Sarah. Barent du Bois, his wife Jacomyntje; their son Garret and his wife Margerat, and *their* son Jacob, Jr. Sometime after this date Isaac and Hannah Van Metre, their children Henry and Sarah and their families emigrated to the South Branch of the Potomac, and no doubt, it was this Isaac, son (?) of John and Sara Van Meter who was associated with his father (?) John in procuring the grant of 40,000

acres of Valley lands from Governor Gooch, some years before. In their respective petitions, John Van Meter states that he is from the "Govt. of New York"; to him was allotted 30,000 acres for 20 families, including his own (of 11 children), relatives and friends. To Isaac, who probably absented himself from New Jersey about this time,—who states that he is from the Province of West Jersey; is allotted 10,000 acres, for 10 German families including his own; provided; that by 1732 the Van Metres will have settled the 30 families upon the granted lands. For some reason which does not yet appear, the Van Meters transferred or assigned their holdings to Jost Hite; and it is evident, that as far as Isaac was concerned—he did not remove his family to Virginia till about 1744, and then settled at Point Pleasant in Hardy county. John Vanmeter with his contingent from New York and Penna. proceeded at once, by way of the old Indian trails through Pennsylvania—to Opequon, Virginia, and settled there under new grants from Jost Hite.

Before dismissing the subject relating to the New Jersey Van Metres, it may be well to say that Kryn Jan Van Meteren, sup. son of Jan Gysbert, could not possibly have been the Indian trader. It seems clear that he was of another family that came from New Utrecht, L. I., to Middletown, N. J., about 1709, and remained in Monmouth county, N. J.

There were also in New Utrecht, in 1698, four families of Jansens, having from one to five children each. They were: Lawrens Jansen, Andries Jansen, Hendrick Jansen and Cryn Jansen. In the same year, Gysbert Jantz, with four children, was living in Flatbush, L. I. Kriyn or Cryn Jansen's son Jan b. 1687 d. y.; his next son John, b. 1688, m. 1718, Ida, dau. of Ryk Hendrickse von Suydam and their descendants for the most part, lived and died in Monmouth county. Both John and Ida are buried on the farm upon which they had settled now in Atlantic Township.

As the children of the first settlers of the Paltz grew into maturity and married, and the latter to a considerable extent, among their own kinsfolk, they sought new homes in distant parts. Family groups from Ulster county, N. Y., made their way to the German

communities in Penna. To Germantown, Perkiomen, Bensalem, Pequea and other localities where their compatriots had preceded them. In the settlements named were found younger branches of the du Bois, Wynkoop, Ferre, Neukirk, Hoogland, Paaling, Heydt and other families, mostly related by marriage; but whether or no John Van Meter dwelt among them after leaving New York, does not as yet appear.

One of the most prominent persons connected with the early Virginia colonists of the Valley, was Hans Jost Heydt, (i. e. John Joseph Hite). His name has been subjected to all sorts of contortions. Jost Hite, as I shall call him, was a native of Strasburg in Alsace. It is said that he married Anna Maria du Bois, a dau. of Louis, one of the Patentees of New Paltz, and therefore must have been a brother-in-law of Joost Jan Van Meteren *alias* John Van Metro. The date of his marriage is uncertain, nor is it yet clear what number of children were in his family when living in the Paltz. Two daughters were baptized in Kingston—Elizabeth in 1711 and Magdalena in 1713. For these, Cornelis and Rebecca (Van Meteren) Elting, and Jacob and Madelena Capsesyen were sponsors respectively. These are the only items referring to Jost Hite on the Kingston records. He next appears in Pastorius Colony at Germantown, in 1716, and in the following year, 1st mo. 15, 1717 a record is found where he paid quit rent on 174 acres of land at Schippack, to the Penna. Land office. He is thus located in the Perkiomen region.

On the 17th, Dec., 1718, he bought of Joseph and Mary Kirkbride, and Thomas and Sarah Stevenson of Bensalem, in Bucks county, Pa., two tracts of land, 100 and 500 acres each respectively, for £175; it was also located in Schippack. Francis Daniel Pastorius drew the deed. In 1719 Jost Hite and his wife Anna Maria, conveyed 141 acres of his holdings to Peter Tysen, shoemaker, of Philadelphia. An additional grant of 50, acres adjoining his other land, was made to Jost Hite in 1725, by the Proprietaries Commissioners. Hite disposed of 100 acres of his Perkiomen plantation, in 1728, to Jacob Markley; and one the 10th of May, of the same year "Yost Hyt", name appears with those of Powling,

du Bois, Froman, Fry and others of "Falckner's Swamp, Schippac and Goshenhoppen, in Colebrookdale," in a numerously signed petition to the Prov. Council, praying for protection against the depredations of the Indians in those parts.

Jost Hite while living in Skippack, seems to have been very thrifty. In addition to farming he carried on weaving and milling, having built a mill on Perkiomen creek; the weaving industry he seems to have brought from Germantown, apparently.

In January 1730, Hite sold the 600 acres, including the mill—still, at what is now Schwenksville—to John Paaling (Pawling) for £540. Paaling, three days later conveyed a half interest in the mill and 58 acres of land to Isaac du Bois (previously referred to), son of Solomon du Bois, who had now located in the neighborhood on his father's lands. Isaac, who was a nephew of Jost Hite and Joost Van Meteren, died in 1729. In 1747 his heirs sold the property to Peter Pennypacker, ancestor of the Hon. S. W. Pennypacker, Governor-elect of Pennsylvania, who now owns and makes his summer home upon the property. It was on these lands, too, that General Washington and the American army encamped for several days both before and after the fateful battle of Germantown, in October, 1777. The property was then known as Pennypacker's Mills and was in the possession of Samuel Pennypacker.

While a resident of the Perkiomen country, among those whom Hite had for neighbors, were the families of Froman, Fry, Conrad, Jones and others whose names afterward became familiar in the Valley of Virginia. Paul Froman m. Hite's dau. Elizabeth. Robert Jones m. Mary, dau. of John Van Metre.

After 1730 we lose sight of Hite in Pennsylvania; but in 1732 his name appears among the Dutch settlers in the Shenandoah valley, where he seems to have bought out the interest of the Van Metres in the 40,000 acre grant and opened it to settlement. At this time Hite was said to have been well advanced in years. He had a large family—at least eight, probably ten, in number. Many of his children were married, and grandchildren born before the "trek" of the Germans led them through Pennsylvania, and Maryland to the banks of the Potowmack.

The names of Jost Hite's children, which I have compiled from various sources were: John, *m.* Zara Elting; Jacob, *m.* a Mary Van Meteren; Isaac *m.* Helita Elting; Abraham *m.* a Rebecca Van Meteren; Elizabeth *m.* Paul Froman; Magdalena, *m.* Jacob Chrisman; Maria, *m.* Geo. Baumann; Susannah *m.* Abraham Weissman, Joseph (?) and Thomas (?). I have the baptismal record of sixteen of the grandchildren of Jost Hite, by the Rev. Johann Caspar Stoever, which occurred at Opequon between the years 1732 and 1739. During the same period Jost Hite and his wife were sponsors not only to these children but for those of his friends: Peter Stephan, Ulrich Buger, Blank and others.

Mr. W. S. Laidley is a lineal descendant of Jost Hite through his oldest son John, and by his only son John's eldest son Jacob, whose eldest dau. Mary Scales Hite *m.* John Laidley, who were the parents of the editor.

There lived at Lebanon, Pa., contemporaneous with Jost Hite, Peter and Abraham Hite and their families. Possibly these may have been relations of Jost. In 1747, the Rev. Stoever baptized several of their children.

With regard to the identity of John Van Metre, the Indian trader, it seems impossible to reconcile the various statements made about him and his family; or to determine positively the relationship, if any, existing between him and Isaac Van Metre of Salem, N. J.; or to set aside the feeling that the Rebecca Van Meteren who *m.* Cornelis Elting was probably the daughter of John. It is possible, if it were true that she was the dau. of John, of Berkeley county, Va., that she may have lost her husband by death and afterward *m.* Solomon Hedges, albeit she had nine children for a second wedding dowry.

In his petition to Governor Gooch for the Virginia lands, John Van Metre informs us that he is of the "Govt. of New York," and has a family of eleven children; of whom, says D. S. Van Metre, in West Va., Magazine, April 1902; there were five there were five sons and six daughters. John Van Metre's will proved at Winchester, Va., in 1745, proves this to be correct, and gives the names

of his children. They were: Abraham, Isaac, Henry and Jacob, sons; Sarah, Mary, Rebecca, Elizabeth, Magdalena and Rachael, daughters. Johannis and Joanna, grandchildren; son and daughter of his *eldest* son Johannes (the German form of Dutch Jan), deceased; both under age Johannes, being deceased, the order in which the names are written may not have been the same as of their birth. Three of these names agree with the baptismal names of Joost Jan Van Meteren's children, at Kingston. Jan, the eldest b. 1683; Rebecca, b. 1686; Lysbeth, b. 1689. Sarah *m.* James Davis, probably the same who was killed by the Indians in 1752; Mary *m.* Robert Jones; Rebecca *m.* Solomon Hedges; Elizabeth *m.* Thomas Shepherd, and Rachael *m.* John (†) Le Farge. (Le Farge).

The late J. B. Kerfott of Martinsburg, Va., supplies the following: Abraham *m.* 1st Ruth Hedges, 2d, Mrs. Wheeler, nee Roberts, Johannas *m.* Rebecca Powelson. He also says, that according to tradition the first wife of John Van Metre was Sara Berdine, of a New York Huguenot family. Evidently the name has been confused and du Bois is probably meant. John Van Meter *m.* 2nd, Margerat ————. The will mentions her name. It also disposes of about 3,400 acres of lands, some of which had been bought of Jost Hite, some acquired of others, and some that lay in Maryland, that was probably bought before he settled in Virginia. He signs his name "John Meter."

There is some reason to assume that John Van Metre after settling his son (†) Isaac, at Salem, N. J., in 1716, resumed his business relations with the Indians of New York, and as they made frequent incursions into the country of their natural enemies the Catawbas and Cherokees in the Carolinas, Van Metre often accompanied them south to the Holston.

At Monocacy, Md., where a number of German and Quaker families from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, had settled about 1725—John Van Meter, and possibly Isaac, too, bought considerable land and here John may have established his family—Jan's in particular—where they would be centrally located on the trail of the trading expeditions between New York and the Carolinas. His sons

Johannas and Isaac both owned land at Monocacy, here Johannes lived and died, perhaps a few years after his marriage as he left only two children. This would account to some extent, for the absence of any mention of Johannas in the accounts and traditions of the Virginia family. Here too, it is possible, that Abraham Van Metre met and married Ruth Hedges; Rebecca, Solomon Hedges, and Elizabeth Thomas Shepherd. Both the Hedges and the Shepherd families were prominent in Maryland before they appeared in Virginia. Even prior to 1725, the Hedges, Shepherds, Zanes and others were among the early Quaker settlers in Salem, N. J., and it is unlikely that the genesis of the families of that name in the valley of Virginia, may be traced to an origin in Fenwick's Colony, Salem county, N. J.

Elizabeth Shepherd received as a part of the legacy from her father John Van Meter, a plantation called "Pelmel," on the Potomac, in Prince George's county, Maryland, a fact which has important bearing upon the subject, since it indicates a possible prior residence in Maryland, before the Van Meters came to Virginia.

—*Samuel Gordon Smyth.*

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