

CHAPTER 4- THE VAN METRE/METEREN FAMILY

Note: Some of the information on this page came from the following link:

http://www.vanmetre.com/Papers/van_meter_pioneers_in_america.htm

Information taken from the article/book “Van Meter Pioneers in America” gives an insight into the Thompson Dutch maternal ancestors. These Dutch immigrants preceded William Thomson and his brother to America by at least one generation. Their paths were destined to cross two generations following the first Van Meter ancestors’ migration to Kingston, Ulster County, New York.

The vocations and lifestyles of the Van Meters were mirror images of the Thompsons. They represented every walk of life including engineers, real estate dealers, doctors, blacksmiths, bakers, merchants, millers, lawyers, educators, ministers, justices of the peace, state legislators, nurses, railroaders, lumbermen, carpenters, cabinet makers, editors, inventors, soldiers and commissioners of banks in some states.

Rather than to deal with the respective virtues of all individuals the travels of a couple of Van Meteren descendants will be traced. John Van Meteren was the father of Rebecca Van Meteren who married Cornelius Eltinge. Yacomintye Eltinge, the daughter of Cornelius Eltinge married William Thompson’s son John and these are the continued line of the Thompsons. William Thompson was the migrating Thompson ancestor and was the Scottish Covenanter on a quest for a new home in America to pursue religious and personal freedoms. This chapter is devoted to the maternal Dutch line that merges with the Thompson line in Frederick/Montgomery County, Maryland. The chapter is derived mostly from Internet information including that taken from official government sites in Virginia and elsewhere.

The following two paragraphs are quotations from the online article “Van Meter Pioneers in America.”

‘Van Meteres/Meterens ‘were the neighbors and friends of some of the giants of American history --- George Washington, James Madison, John Marshall, Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, Abraham Lincoln. Van Meters helped vote Washington into the Virginia house of burgesses, later fought under his command at Boston and Valley Forge. Van Meters defended Boonesborough at the shoulder of Daniel Boone, marched to Kaskaskia and Vincennes with George Rogers Clark, were boyhood neighbors of Abe Lincoln in Kentucky. Van Meters opened lead mines in Illinois; they piloted river boats; they worked on the railroad; they fought for both the Union and Confederacy, sometimes brother against brother; they won a Congressional Medal of Honor; they established churches, courthouses, forts, and schools; they were missionaries to the Indians; they won the Kentucky Derby and invented a parachute. Van Meter State Park in Missouri is a gift from a Van Meter. There are little towns named Van Meter in Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Iowa (‘where a Feller can grow’). Numerous other towns sprang up years after Van Meters were first settlers on the land. This account is but a glimpse of the family in America before the Civil War with particular reference to the branch which settled in Putnam County, Ohio. It is an account of the surname Van Meter and so regrettably neglects the collateral families into which the Van Meter women married.

The name Van Meter comes from the Dutch Van Meteren, pronounced ‘Van Mayteren,’ which means from the manor or village of Meteren located in the Waal Valley about halfway between Rotterdam and Nijmegen. In America the name was shortened to Van Meter, but still pronounced Van Mater. Some adopted this phonetic spelling. Others, probably influenced by English court clerks’ familiar ‘re’ ending, began using spellings like Van Matre and Van Metre, either one or two words. All are related no matter what spelling!

The Van Meterens were responsible for settling new immigrants onto land obtained from land grants. John Van Meteren was the grandfather of Yacomintye Eltinge and he was the source for the land grants and the foundational force behind many churches, including a Primitive Baptist Church in Kentucky. There are divergent Van Meteren lines who lived in Augusta County, Virginia, Berkeley County, West Virginia (formerly Fredericks County, Maryland), and later in North Carolina and Kentucky. Those descendants were responsible for founding multiple Primitive Baptist churches as well.

The American history of the Dutch maternal ancestors begins in Ulster County, New York. There is much information available about the Dutch Reformed Church at Kingston, Ulster County, New York. The marriages of some of these maternal ancestors are found recorded in those old records. It is also interesting that one additional DNA match with a Henry Thompson descendant was from Ulster County, New York but his line has yet to be researched. The marriage of a descendant from a different Henry Thompson of Brunswick, New Jersey provided both a proven DNA link to the same Thompson family from Scotland and a relationship by the marriage of cousins on the maternal side as well. The Joost Jansen Van Meteren referenced in the following paragraphs was commonly known as John Van Meteren which was *the English equivalent of the name 'Jan.'* *The prefix 'Van' is equivalent to the English word 'from.'*

A discussion of Rebecca Van Meteren's mother Sarah Dubois is from Web Site:

<http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/l/u/b/Jacqueline--Lubinski/GENE4-0002.html> and is as follows. *Sarah's father, ' Louis3 DuBois (Chretien2, Wallerand1) was born October 27, 1627 in Wicres, La Barree, Flanders, and died June 06, 1696 in Kingston, Ulster Co., NY. He married Catharine Blanchar October 10, 1655 in Mannheim,Germany, daughter of Matthew Blanchar and Magdalena Joire. She was born abt. 1635 in Artois, France, and died 1709 in Kingston, Ulster Co., NY.'*

Notes for Louis DuBois (from the same Web site):

'Louis Dubois was a leader of the 12 founders (patentees) of the town of New Paltz, Ulster Co., NY. New Paltz is the second oldest settlement in southern NY State. The land was purchased from the Indians before William Penn purchased his namesake state and New Paltz was one of the few Huguenot settlements in this country. The first settlers left France because of 'religious persecution, and after a residence of a short period in that part of Germany known as the Paltz, or Palatinate, came to the New World from 1660 to 1675. '... it is probable that by 1663 a score or more' (of Huguenots) 'had found their way to Kingston -- called Esopus by the Dutch -- then a flourishing village.' (Note: Kingston, NY is about 20 miles or so from New Paltz). *'We know that Louis DuBois, who was one of the first New Paltz immigrants, had been there two or three years at least before that time. In 1663 Kingston was burned by the Indians, and the wife and three children of Louis DuBois, the Walloon, as he was called, was among those carried away captive. 'This Louis DuBois, who became the leader of the settlement at New Paltz, was usually called Louis the Walloon, the Walloons being the residents of that part of Flanders lying between the Scheldt and Lys. He was born in the hamlet of Wicres, near Lille, in the province of Artois, in French Flanders, October 27, 1626 and was the son of Chretien DuBois, whose farm is still pointed out. Louis moved to Manheim on the Rhine, the capital of the Palatinate, or Paltz, a little principality, now incorporated in Baden, and there he married Catharine Blancon, the daughter of a burgher residing there, named Matthew Blancon, who was also a native of Artois. Manheim was, at that time, a refuge for the Protestants from the neighboring parts of France.'*

From: *Van Meter Pioneers in America*

'Jan Joosten Van Meteren arrived at New Amsterdam with his family on the ship 'Vos' (Fox) on April 12, 1662. He settled in an area on the west side of the Hudson River about 60 miles upstream where a group of Dutch and Huguenot immigrants were establishing a collection of little communities -- New Paltz, Wiltwyck, Esopus, Hurley and Marbletown -- near the present Kingston, Ulster County, New York at the foothills of the Catskill mountains. Jan Joosten brought his wife Maycke Hendricks and five children with him, three of them by Maycke's first husband Willem Krorn (Gysbert, Lysbet and Geertje age 15, 12 and 9) and two of his own, Joost Jansen age six and Catherine age two ½.

Only a year after arriving in America little Joost Jansen Van Meteren (otherwise known as John Van Meteren) had an adventure which set the pattern for his whole life and planted the pioneering seed which flowered in succeeding generations. He was captured by the Indians. On June 7, 1663 while the men were away working in the fields, the Minnisink Indians entered several villages under the pretext of selling vegetables and suddenly began murdering their unarmed victims. They took all they could find of value, set the villages on fire and took about 45 women and children captives. Among them were Jan Joosten's wife Maycke and son Joost from Wiltwyck and Louis DuBois' wife Catherine Blanchar and baby daughter Sarah from Esopus. Joost and Sarah were later to be married. For three months the men searched the Catskills, but had no success until on Sept. 3 a friendly Indian

gave a clue to the location of the captives. A rescue party was formed led by Louis DuBois and Capt. Kreiger whose journal relates this event. Meanwhile, since the Indians were running short of food and winter was not far off they had decided to burn some of their Captives. Catherine DuBois and her baby Sarah were selected to be first. When the Indians were about to put the torch to her pyre, she began to sing the words of the 137th Psalm. Enchanted by her voice they demanded that she continue to sing, Of course, she did. The approaching rescuers heard her, were guided to the spot, attacked the Indians and released all the prisoners. Little Joost, too young to be much affected by the horrors of captivity, thoroughly enjoyed his three months of Indian life. Later as an adult, he frequently left home to spend many weeks at a time with various tribes. In this way he was among the first whites to explore the wilderness areas to the west of the coastal settlements. He was particularly impressed by the beauty of the Valley of Virginia and urged his sons to settle there, which they eventually did. Thus began the pioneering spirit of the Van Meters who for the next 200 years were with the first settlers and participants in the key events which shaped the nation as it thrust evermore westward.'

The following is an account by Judge Abraham Shriver and includes the religious motivations that brought these Dutch (and French surname Verree) to America. You will find a documented business and religious relationship with William Penn and the documented account about the Eltinge family being of low Dutch descent. Included in this article are specific details about William Thompson, the father of James Fields Thompson. The Ferree family, the Dubois family, the Eltinge family, the Thompson family, and the Van Meteren family were related by marriages.

Let's trace this activity in more detail, beginning with Joost's father Jan Joosten Van Meteren, our immigrant ancestor. In 1667 he was elected an elder in the Dutch Reformed Church in Wiltwyck and became more and more prominent in civil and religious affairs. His house was a popular place for baptisms. In 1673 he was elected one of the four magistrates of Hurley and Marletown. Beginning in 1689 he began to accumulate land grants in the Province of East Jersey on the South Branch of the Raritan River in the area of the present Somerville, New Jersey in Somerset County. Here he owned 1835 acres, the home for a number of years of Joost, his sons and grandsons. Jan Joosten Van Meteren died in New Jersey in about 1706.

Joost Jansen Van Meteren, who sometimes called himself John Van Meter, married Sarah DuBois at New Paltz on December 12, 1682. About 15 years later he moved his growing family to Somerset County, New Jersey on his father's land which he later inherited. Joost and Sarah seem to have had five sons, but only three of them are well known. John, our ancestor, was the eldest, baptized in Kingston, N.Y. on October 14, 1683. The others were Isaac, Henry, Abraham and Jacob. There also were four daughters Rebecca, Lysbeth, Rachel and Malinda. John and his first wife Sarah Bodine had three children born in Somerset County and baptized in the Reformed Dutch Church on the Raritan at Readington. Soon after Sarah died in 1709 John married again to Margaret Maligner and had eight more children including our Isaac Van Meter, born in Somerset County on June 3, 1713. Isaac grew up in Somerset County, married Alice Scholl there in 1736 and had three children who were baptized in the Readington church, including our Johannes, or John, baptized June 6, 1740.

In the meanwhile the Van Meters were on the move again. Joost's sons John and Isaac and Henry, aided by their widowed mother Sarah DuBois Van Meter, began buying land in Salem County, New Jersey in 1714 until they owned about 6000 acres there in the vicinity of Pittsgrove and Daretown. Joost's son Henry settled in Salem County and except for a few years in Virginia lived out his life there. John and Isaac, however, heeding the advice of their father to settle in the rich lands of the Valley of Virginia, were anxious to move onto the south.

The next step in that direction was to Frederick County, Maryland, at that time part of Prince Georges County, where in 1726 John purchased a tract called 'Meter' on Meter's Run, a tributary of the Monocacy River. It was upon this ground that the Battle of Monocacy Junction was fought many years later during the Civil War.

Their eyes still on the Valley of Virginia, John and Isaac developed a plan to settle their relatives and friends there. They applied to the Governor and the Colonial Council of Virginia for land grants. John asked for 10,000 acres plus 20,000 additional acres within two years if he were successful in settling 20 families near the present Martinsburg, W. Va. Isaac asked for 10,000 acres to settle 10 families in an area farther west near the present Moorefield, W. Va. These grants were approved on June 17, 1730, but were immediately contested by Lord Fairfax who claimed these areas were within the bounds of his grant from the King of the 'Northern Neck,' lying between

