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THE EARLY
HISTORY
OF THE
COURTRIGHT
FAMILY

AUGUST 1907

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Early history of the Courtright f

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THE "BRINDLED COW."

[See Page 6.]

Early History of The Cortez=Van Kortryk=Van Kortright=Kortright Courtright Family.

MORE than a third of a century's unremitant study and research of the early and later history of the COURTRIGHT FAMILY has resulted in discovering and bringing to light many facts of exceeding importance to the Family and to History.

CORTEZ, a Spanish Nobleman, enjoyed either the proud distinction or suffered the opprobrium of being the progenitor of a family of which we are of the XXth century representatives.

History, research, study for years have persistently refused to open their vaults and lead us further back into the dim ages of the forgotten past beyond Cortez, the Spanish Nobleman. He is, therefore, our Alpha, while doubtless among the latest posterity will be found our Omega.

Over in France, near the borders of Spain, Cortez had for a neighbor a man whose name has been heralded through the ages, and whose memory will be loved and revered by countless millions in the centuries to come—JOHN CALVIN, THE RELIGIOUS REFORMER, THE PRO-TESTANT.

At that date all Europe and Continental Europe were in the throes of a tremendous religious revolution. The clergy, the nobility, the men of affairs, as well as the peasantry, became deeply concerned in the religious movement—in the tremendous wave which was sweeping over civilization. Never, perhaps, since the Christian Era were such scenes presented in the religious world. The name of JOHN CALVIN on every lip—either to be praised or censured.

From the mighty vortex, which threatened the lives and property of all the people, Cortez, strong of mind and body, a leader among the people, arose in his majesty and publicly renounced the Church of State, and proclaimed the doctrine enunciated by Calvin; he became a Calvinist—a pro-testant. Religious zeal was followed by intolerance, and doubtless many wrongs were committed under the cloak of the Church. Edifices of the Church of State were razed to the ground: their paintings, figures and stucco work were utterly destroyed; protestant churches were erected on their sites, and great excitement and much confusion prevailed among the people. Spain witnessed with horror and blanched faces the people gathering in their might and throwing off the established Church. A resort to arms followed; the legions of the Spanish army were assembled and gave battle. But Spain had too many guns for the Calvinists; and the latter, after suffering great loss of life and much treasure, were obliged to retire into Flanders, later into Holland, and there, upon the river Lys, they builded a city, which they named Kortryk, in honor of Cortez, whose name had been changed to conform to the Dutch idea of the meaning of the word, and he

being a Nobleman, was entitled to the prefix "van" or "von"—his Dutch name being van Kortryk. Many French Huguenots accompanied him and his army of protestants to Holland, and no contemporary writer disguises the fact that Cortez—afterward van Kortryk—was esteemed as none others were: hence they builded the city and gave it his name, that future generations might have his name and deeds perpetuated until the cause of protestantism would need no monuments of stone or of brass to speak to the generations yet unborn of the deeds of prowess, of heroism of the Cortez—van Kortryk—who sacrificed all in life worth having, except honor, the respect of his people, the consciousness of doing right and worshiping God according to the dictates of his own conscience—but there, to-day, on the river Lys, stands the little old city, half concealed by the ivy and the honeysuckle, the monument erected by his neighbors to perpetuate the name of our progenitor—the Alpha of our people. The discovery of this fact alone, well authenticated, undisputed, were there none others, fully justifies the writer for the long years of research in tracing the name and history of the Family whose name he is proud to bear.

After permanently making Holland their place of abode, protestant spires pointed heavenward, while persecution, at times unabated, still continued; but the "Clan" MacGregor and the other "Clans" from the north of Ireland and south of Scotland were their true and trusted allies; (the "Clans" were groups or communities of Calvinists, sometimes called "Covenanters;") and when they were needed, rushed to their aid, and unitedly they would sweep

down upon the hordes of Spanish soldiery, and drive them from their soil.

During the hundred or more years immediately following the arrival of van Kortryk into Holland, his descendants were blessed with much of this world's goods ; but, at length, tiring of almost incessant warfare, some of them—Jan Bastiaensen Kortryk, his sons and his brother Michael disposed of their property, and, having received glowing accounts of the new Harlem in the New World, concluded to brave the wrath of Old Ocean and seek homes where there would be less strife and religious persecution.

On April 16th, 1663, Jan or John Bastiaensen Kortryk, his three sons and daughter, with their families, together with his brother Michael, sometimes called 'Chiel, and his family, together with some of his Dutch friends and French Huguenots, refugees, took passage on the good ship Brindled Cow—Jan Bergen, Master—and set sail for America. It cost Jan (John) Bastiaensen Kortryk, for himself and family, 204 florins and 10 stivers (a florin is valued at forty cents and a stiver at two cents, making the cost of passage \$81.80). One hundred and thirteen years before the Declaration of Independence our name was transplanted to American soil. The good ship which safely carried these Dutch ancestors to the land of the "Free" (or to become such more than 100 years later) bore the poetic (?) name of the "Brindled Cow." In this degenerate (?) day, Shorthorns and even Jerseys have to a great extent supplanted the "Brindle," but, to the writer, a "brindled" cow commands his unqualified respect, and he doffs his hat to "Old Brindle." It must be borne in mind that, until within a

few years, both in the Old and New World, vessels and taverns (hotels) all had names of some beast or fowl. The writer remembers that but a few years since down in New England he observed that the old custom still prevailed in the rural districts, and the "Bald Eagle Tavern," the "White Horse Tavern," and the like were quite common. It may be considered that the price paid for passage of the Kortryk family was an insignificant sum; yet, when it is remembered that the purchase value of money at that time was about five times as great as of to-day, it will be seen that Herr Jan Bergen was pretty well paid for carrying these emigrants across the "pond."

Before renewing the acquaintance of the Kortryks, after their arrival in America, permit me to say, parenthetically, that much time and persistent labor were spent in "keeping on the right track" in tracing the family while in Flanders, and especially in Holland, for the reason that family names were the exception and not the rule; the mass of people in Fatherland used only a patronymic form by adding to the child's Christian name that of the father. Another trouble encountered was the habit of some of the Dutch of calling themselves or permitting themselves to be called by "any old name," and the only way of obtaining accuracy was by securing the name as entered on the church records and in titles to their lands—for when their names were entered on church or title records, THEY SAW TO IT that their TRUE names, their REAL names were PROPERLY inscribed. For instance, WHY did Jan or John permit himself to be known as "Jan Bastiaensen," instead of his full name—his real

name—of “Jan Bastiaensen Kortryk?” But when he bought real estate he was always sure to have his name wind up with “Kortryk”—or when the church record was employed he was always determined to have, and he did have, his name written thereon in full—he seemed to want to be known on the “other side of Jordan” by his full name—and so it was ALWAYS entered.

The “Brindled Cow” reached port in the New World in safety.

Cornelis Jansen (or the son of Jan), who emigrated with his father, Jan Bastiaensen, was born in 1645, at Beest, in Gelderland; in 1665 he married Metje, daughter of Bastiaen Elyssen, and widow of Claes Teunisz van Appledorn; a lady who, after Jansen's early death in 1689, proved her ability both to manage his business and enhance his estate, the use of which, under his will dated Feb. 25th of that year, she was to enjoy till her death or re-marriage. Having been a trooper he gave his eldest son Johannes (John) “the best horse, and the best saddle, and the best boots, and the best pistols, and holsters, and carbine, and cutlass.” He must have been his favorite child, for over and above his share of the estate, he left him “the lot of land at Jochem Pieters, to-wit, the lot by the great gate.” He left four children—besides Johannes, above named, Laurens; Aefie, who married Jonas Lewis, an Englishman, in 1688; becoming a widow, she married Marcus Tiebaut, in 1698; and Annetie, who married Adrian Quackenbos. The widow was usually called Metje Cornelius, sometimes Metje Jansen, and sometimes Metje Bastiaen (from her father). She drew from the “common lands in the several divisions, a considerable acreage—but in her title

papers, it was ALWAYS Metje Kortright! In the last years of the XXVII century the name of Kortryk was so far anglicized as to be spelled and pronounced Kortright, and we can find no one of the family who was known as Kortryk after the year A. D. 1700.

Johannes Cornelis Kortright (John Cornelius) was born in 1673, and in 1701 was married to Wyntie, the daughter of Cornelis Dyckman. The next year he was made constable. He died in 1711 and in 1717 his widow became the second wife of Zacharias Sickels. Johannes (John) left three children, viz: Metje (who married John Bussing), Nicholas and Jannetie (who married Johannes Van Wyck. Nicholas became a man of affairs, for he became constable of the town in 1729, and afterward collector. In 1731 he married Elizabeth, the daughter of Eide van Huyse, of Bloomingdale. On the death of his uncle Laurens, in 1726, the Kortright lands were divided, his portion being 101 acres; he accumulated considerable other real estate, and, at his death, on Nov. 19, 1751, he left a large estate. He had two sons and one daughter, viz.: John, born in 1732; Nicholas, born in 1743, and Frances, born in 1741, and who married John Norris, PERUKE-maker (a peruke is defined to be "a periwig; an artificial cap of hair.") Nicholas, a sail-maker, owned property in New York, where he lived, and he was a vestryman of Trinity Church from 1787 to 1792. He died in 1820, leaving children, two of whom were Nicholas and James, but of them and the rest of his immediate family we can learn but little.

Laurens Cornelis (Cornelius) Kortright, the son of Cornelis, the grand-

son of John Bastiaensen, was born in 1681. From HIM sprang OUR Family. He was married in 1703 to Helena, the daughter of Captain Johannes (John) Benson. Soon thereafter becoming a widower, he married, in or about 1708, Margaret, the daughter of Arent Bassing. Laurens served as constable in 1708-9. He succeeded to the homestead on Harlem Lane, which at his death, fell in the division to his widow, Margaret, (called Grieta), together with other lands, leaving her quite a landed estate. The old homestead descended to her son Lawrence (the name Laurens anglicized.)

Laurens Kortright's children by his first wife were Cornelius and Elizabeth, (she married Gilbert Garrison, of New York, in 1753) ; and, by his second wife, Aaron, Lawrence, Eve (who married Adolph Benson), Mattie (who married Abraham Myer) and Susannah (who married Aaron Myer.)

Lawrence was the last of the name to hold the old homestead; he was never married and died in 1761. The old homestead was located upon what is now known as 6th avenue, its north corner touching 110th street, New York city. Litigation over the ownership of this property was begun by one Valentine Nutter against Lawrence's brother and his co-heirs (who had continuous possession of it until near the close of the century) when the "divers differences, controversies and disputes about the said lands" were compromised, the defendants were paid a consideration and deeds of release were given to Nutter, after which he erected a new dwelling thereon and continued to live there till the year 1831 (being then 90 years old), and until it was swept away by the opening of 6th avenue.

Aaron Kortright married Margaret, daughter of John Delamater. He purchased the Delamater farm and later other lands. At length he and his nephew, Lawrence Kortright, merchant, of New York, made a trade of lands by which Aaron secured 241 acres in Orange county, whither he moved, and continued to live the remainder of his life. Many of the descendants of Aaron people western New York and Pennsylvania, to this day.

Cornelius Kortright, eldest son of Laurens Cornelius, was born in 1704; he married Hester, the daughter of John Cannon, of New York, and owned property in Queen (now Pearl) street, where he conducted business. He was assistant alderman of Montgomery ward, 1738-40. His two slaves, implicated in the Negro Plot in 1741, were transported to San Domingo. He had six children, viz : Lawrence, John, Cornelius, Maria, Helena and Elizabeth. Lawrence, the eldest son, also a merchant, became very wealthy and prominent. In the old French war he was part owner of several privateers fitted out at New York against the enemy. He was one of the founders of the Chamber of Commerce in 1768. He had large interest in Tyron county lands, and on his purchase the township of Kortright was settled. Before his death he conveyed his farm at Harlem to his son (Captain John). By his wife, Hannah (Aspinwall), he had one son and four daughters, viz : Captain John ; Sarah, who married Col. Heylinger, of Santa Cruz, in 1775 ; Hester, who married Nicholas Gouverneur in 1790 ; Elizabeth, who married the Honorable James Monroe, who was twice Governor of Virginia and President of the United States for eight years ; and

Mary, who married Thomas Knox, Esqr. Captain John obtained his title during the Revolutionary War—where he served with great valor and distinction.

John, a brother of Lawrence, removed to Pennsylvania when a young man, became an agriculturalist, served during the Revolutionary War—sometimes known as Captain John—was the ancestor of our "Courtright Family".

His son, Abraham van Courtright, (who was likewise a soldier of the Revolution), with his wife Effa (whose maiden name was Drake, from the south of Scotland), together with their entire family of five children, consisting of three sons and two daughters, viz: John, Abraham van, Jesse D., Margaret, (who afterward became the wife of Walter McFarland), and Christiania, (who afterward became the wife of a Mr. Cahoon), moved to Ohio, in the year 1801. They came "over the mountains" from Luzerne county, Pennsylvania, (their former home), in two two-horse wagons, (with the old English beds), bringing with them necessary bedding, cooking utensils, axes and other implements, as well as a meagre supply of household furniture—and they also brought a cow. En route to their new home they remained over night at Lancaster—then a village built on the low lands just west of the hill, (upon which the Courthouse is now situated). They put up at the "Tavern", a two-story hewed log house, (regarded then as a very imposing structure), immediately in the rear of which was a stout stockade, where the horses, wagons, cow and other property were enclosed for the night, secure from the depredations of wild animals, both two and four legged.

The next morning the "Courtright family" bade adieu to the "Tavern" and started in a north-westerly course; they plodded along covering as they supposed about fifteen miles; night coming on and the locality pleasing them they camped for the night; as was usual, (and necessary), one of the male members of the family doing guard duty. The next morning the sun shone brightly, the landscape was so inviting, and the locality being about where they designed to locate, they determined to locate RIGHT THERE—AND THEY DID SO. A log cabin was erected without delay, and they were now at their own home in the "North-West Territory." The farm upon which the cabin was built has been owned by, in the possession of, and has been the HOME of some members of the "Courtright Family" from that day to this.

Abraham van Courtright became recognized as a strong man intellectually by his neighbors far and wide, and from an old Justice's Docket in possession of the writer it appears that he was a Justice of the Peace for several years on and after 1806. On the "twenty-seventh day of October in the year of our Lord Christ 1817" he executed his Will, (the original Will is now in the possession of the writer). He died June 12th, A. D. 1825, in the 77th year of his age, having been born on the 4th day of June, A. D. 1749.

When this (Bloom) township was organized, it required a name, and many were suggested, when John (the grandfather of the writer) suggested the name of "Bloom"; "why call it Bloom?" was inquired of him. In his quiet yet impressive way he answered—"My father and his entire family came from

Bloom township, Luzerne county, Pennsylvania—that was our old home—and let us name it Bloom.” The suggestion was adopted—and the township was named Bloom.

The home of the “Courtright Family” was transplanted from Bloom township, in the old Keystone State, to Bloom township, in the Buckeye State, where many of the family have filled their allotted sphere in life's great drama.

SAMUEL W. COURTRIGHT.

Circleville, Ohio, August 22nd, 1907.



Addenda.

The history of our Family from the time of Abraham van Courtright to the present, (for want of time to complete), will furnish the subject of a paper to be presented later, which will be known as

THE LATER HISTORY OF THE COURTRIGHT FAMILY,
and by preserving this paper, a history of the Family, (so far as this branch is concerned), will then be complete.

The difficult matter of securing the EARLY history of the family from the time of Cortez, the original van Kortryk, to the dawn of the XIX Century has been accomplished. Any industrious, painstaking writer can prepare the next

paper. It is true that in many instances the portrayal in detail has been too meager, yet it should be borne in mind that the difficulties encountered have been enormous and in some instances well nigh insurmountable. Accuracy has been the constant aim of the writer, fiction has not been drawn upon, and every statement furnished is believed to be strictly in accordance with historical facts.

The name of the direct and remote descendants of the van Kortryk emigrants of 1663 is legion, and it would require years of constant labor and many volumes to record their history.

We have found Courtright, Cartwrights and Cutrights (the name Courtright corrupted) in almost every advanced civilization—"from the rivers to the ends of the earth."

Soon after the Revolution, by common consent, the name Kortright was completely anglicized and by like consent the "van" was omitted as a prefix, so that the name we bear of COURTRIGHT became the family name. One head of a family called himself Cartwright, another Cutright, while still another took the name of Low, (direct ancestor of Seth Low, former Mayor of New York and President of Columbia University). A few adhered to the "van" but the prefix has almost entirely disappeared.

We have found that from the earliest history most of the Family have been Agriculturalists—solid, substantial, intelligent farmers, yet the learned professions, the Bench and Halls of Legislation have been honored by many of

them—while others have carved their names in history by the sword wielded in achieving independence and in defense of their country.

In the prosecution of this work many pleasing incidents have been afforded and many pleasant acquaintances have been formed, and the "uninitiated" would be furnished with a surprise if they knew of the great number of persons, who have "turned up," claiming to be of the blood of the Courtright. Quite recently a Senator from one of the Western states KNEW he was related—investigation proved that he was—but a LEETLE too remote "to be counted."

Now "just one word more"—quite a number of the family entertain the belief that a "Coats of Arms" of the Family is extant, and want it "shown up;" while we believe the information is reliable and trustworthy, we have not yet been able to secure it. Some of the "Knickerbockers"—some of the "400," who yet spell their name "Kortright"—I am sure could oblige us—and when we succeed in breaking through the "Chinese Wall" by which they are surrounded, why—THEN WE WILL KNOW "Where we are at." S. W. C.



1885

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