

F 145
.H8 D3
Copy 1

THE HUGUENOTS
On the Hackensack.

By D. D. DEMAREST.



THE HUGUENOTS ON THE HACKENSACK.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE HUGUENOT SOCIETY OF AMERICA IN THE
FRENCH CHURCH DU SAINT-ESPRIT, NEW YORK, APRIL 13, 1885;
BEFORE THE NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AT TRENTON,
JANUARY 26, 1886; BEFORE THE NEW BRUNSWICK HIS-
TORICAL CLUB, FEBRUARY 18, 1886, AND IN THE
NORTH REFORMED CHURCH, OF SCHRAALEN-
BERG, N. J., FEBRUARY 19, 1886.

—BY—

REV. DAVID D. DEMAREST, D.D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.



NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.:
THE DAILY FREDONIAN STEAM PRINTING HOUSE.

1886.

F145
C22

21

THE HUGUENOTS

ON THE HACKENSACK.

THE paper which I propose to read to you this evening will chiefly comprise matters so purely local, that I can scarcely hope to secure the interest of this national society. The actors were men who were not great in either Church or State. Much will necessarily be said about my own ancestor whose name I bear, and perhaps some may consider my narrative more appropriate to a family reunion, than to an annual meeting of the "Huguenot Society of America."

But having been assured that the members of this Society will be glad to hear about the fortunes of any one, even of the smallest and least of the Huguenot colonies in America, I am here to tell you what I know about the Huguenots on the Hackensack, in the Province of New Jersey.

The fact that there ever was a colony of Huguenots on the Hackensack is probably known by very few people, and these few are doubtless indebted for most of their knowledge about it to the admirable history of Harlem, by Mr. James Riker. I gratefully acknowledge my obligations to Mr. Riker for a knowledge of many facts which he has, by his faithful and patient investigations, brought to light. On page 392, of his book, is a very valuable foot note on this colony, containing statements which I have verified by original documents, and to which I have been enabled to add somewhat.*

This little settlement was, so far as I know, the only one looking to organization and permanency that was made by Huguenots in the province of New Jersey, though individual families did locate here and there, and a little cluster of them settled in the neighborhood of Princeton. The colony was composed of very few families at the beginning, and the number was never increased to any great extent by accessions from without. Very little is to-day known about its origin and history, even in the immediate vicinity of the original settlement, so thoroughly have all traditions about it died out. The French element was so speedily absorbed by the surrounding Dutch, that not a few of the numerous descendants of the Huguenot pioneers, from whom the farms they occupy have

*Harlem, its origin and early annals by James Riker, New York, 1881. In the note referred to, are two mistakes; first, for Essa we should read Essex, (County of Essex); and for Peiret, we should read Daille.

come down in unbroken descent through seven or eight generations, verily believe that they are of pure Holland stock, and the story of their French origin is to them a new revelation.

To gather up what may be found of the true and almost romantic history of this little company of 200 years ago, has been with me a labor of love, and a work of absorbing interest. But little would I have found if the men of that day had not kept public records in Church and State, with some measure of care, and if my only resource had been the materials preserved by a pious reverence for ancestry.

It is even necessary that I should define the geographical position of this colony. Where was it situated? You may have occasion at some time to travel on the New Jersey and New York railway which connects Jersey City and Stony Point on the Hudson, running through the valley of the Hackensack, in Northern New Jersey, and in Rockland county, New York. Twelve miles from Jersey City, on the line of this road, is the ancient and beautiful village of Hackensack. About two miles North of this village is the Cherry Hill station, near to which is a bridge crossing the Hackensack known as the New Bridge, [†] to distinguish it from the Old Bridge which crosses the stream a little more than a mile to the north, at River Edge station. If after leaving Cherry Hill station you look out of your car window, eastward across the river, you will soon see on an eminence, a few rods from the shore, the white marble head-stones that indicate a burial place of the dead. This is what is known in the neighborhood as the old French burial ground, confessedly, one of the oldest cemeteries, if not the oldest in that region of country.

How often have I passed this spot in my boyhood, my home being about three miles to the north of it, and it being quite near to the highway leading to Hackensack, the county seat. And yet, to my shame be it said, I did not know until long after I had reached manhood, why this was called the French burial ground. No one told me the reason, and I had not curiosity enough to enquire. I had a vague notion that either some Frenchman of note had a long time ago been buried there, or that such an one had lived in the neighborhood and given or sold the land for this place of burial. I am, furthermore, ashamed to say that I never entered it until about two years ago. And yet there lies the dust of the principal pioneer Huguenot settlers of that vicinity, and among them of my own ancestors. Not a few of the descendants of the men and women who have been there buried, doubtless pass every day in sight of this cemetery, ignorant of the fact that their French ancestors lie there, ignorant even of the fact that they had French ancestors.

Our surprise at this will, however, be diminished when we consider that these people brought a knowledge of the Dutch language as well as of their native French with them from Europe.

*There was no bridge at this spot until about the time of the Revolutionary War.

that being thrown among the Dutch they were compelled to use their language everywhere, except in their own families; that in the early generations already the Dutch superseded the French in the Huguenot families also, and kept its place from generation to generation until it was in turn pushed out by the English, though to this day retaining a slight foothold in some households in Bergen and adjacent counties. It is, therefore, not so strange after all, that the descendants of the Huguenots should be reckoned by others, and believed by themselves to be Dutch, and should even take pride in their Dutch descent.

Now it was in the neighborhood of this cemetery that David des Marest with his wife, his two sons, Jean and David, with their wives and children, a third unmarried son Samuel, and Jaques La Rou settled in the Spring of 1678, and where they were soon after joined by Nicholas de Veaux, Jean du Rij, (Durie,) Daniel du Voor, Andries Tiebout, Daniel Ribou and others. Who then was this David des Marest, [*] the leader and chief spirit of this colony, and how did he happen to locate in this spot? He was a native of Beauchamp, a little village of Picardy, in France, about 22 miles West of the City of Amiens. He was born about the year 1620. The family of des Marest was very numerous in that part of France, and highly respectable. David des Marest, Sieur le Feret, whose seat was at Oiseumont, held many high offices in the State, and he was moreover an influential Elder in the French Protestant Church. His son, Samuel, known in the theological world as Maresius, his name being Latinized after the custom of the times, was Professor of Theology, at Groningen, and a voluminous, controversial writer. His sons, Daniel and Henri, were preachers, and with the aid of their father, prepared what has been pronounced the finest edition of the French Bible that has ever been published. How closely the David des Marest, who came to this country, was allied to them is not known. His father's name was Jean, a Protestant Christian, who, with his family, had left his dear native France, like many others, on account of the troubles of the present and the uncertainties of the future, to find peace, and freedom of worship among their Dutch neighbors who gave to all such a hearty welcome and secure home. He settled at Middleburg, on the Island of Walcheren Zeeland, at what time we are unable to say. The marriage of his son David and Marie Sohier, daughter of Francois Sohier, from Nieppe, a town of Hainault, 13 miles East from Hazebrook, took place, as the records of the Walloon Church at Middleburg inform us, July 24th, 1643. The des Marest and Sohier families had probably resided in that City for some time when the young people formed this matrimonial connection. Two sons were born to them in Middleburg—Jean, who was baptized April 14th, 1645, and David, who was baptized June 22nd, 1649. The latter must have died in childhood, for the name David was given to a third son who was born after the removal of the family from this City.

*His descendants write the name variously as Demarest, Demorest, Demaree, Demaray, &c.

In the year 1651, David des Marest had removed with his family to Mannheim, on the Rhine, the chief City of the Lower Palatinate. The French Protestants were at this time going from various parts in great numbers to this City, invited and encouraged by the Elector, Charles Lewis, who offered great inducements for them to settle in his dominions. A French Protestant Church was there formed, the Elector himself providing the building. It was called the "Temple of Concord," because Lutherans as well as Calvinists were allowed to use it for public worship. Some of the Huguenots, who afterward came to New Paltz, were connected with this Church. At Mannheim two sons were born to David des Marest, David in 1652 and Samuel in 1656. It is probable that another child was born in the same city, who died in infancy shortly after the arrival of the family in America, for there were four children when the family landed in this country, the youngest of whom was one year old, and we know that of these, only the three eldest, Jean, David and Samuel reached maturity. Another son, Daniel was born in Harlem, N. Y., and baptized in the Dutch Church of New York, July 7th, 1666, who died as the result of an accident when $5\frac{1}{2}$ years of age.

But Mannheim was not to be the permanent home of this family. The Catholic Princes were threatening the Palatinate with hostilities, and many of the Protestant refugees, well knowing the woes that would come upon them if the country should fall into the hands of the deadly enemies of their faith, resolved to leave it. Des Marest and some others determined to emigrate to America. He was in the prime of life, being little more than forty years of age. He felt that at least rest from persecution would be found in the new world, which also gave a better promise than the old for the temporal future of his children and children's children in all their generations.

Several of these families passed down the Rhine to Amsterdam and sailed thence in the "Bontekoe," spotted or brindled cow, for New Amsterdam, which they reached April 16th, 1663.

Immediately on his arrival, David des Marest with his family joined the Huguenot Colony on Staten Island, a little South of the Narrows. The high esteem in which he was held by the people of the island is evident from the fact that in the following year, 1664, he was chosen as one of the two delegates from Staten Island to the Provincial Assembly of New Netherland, which met to consider the state of the Province just before its surrender to the British.

After a residence of two years on Staten Island, he bought property at New Harlem, and removed thither in the Autumn of 1665. He afterwards added several lots of land to his original purchase, and Harlem was his home during $12\frac{1}{2}$ years.

Mr. Riker has related many of the incidents of his life during those years. He was one of the most prominent citizens of the place, and was deemed worthy of the highest positions which the little community could give him, and seems to have been faith-

to every trust. He sometimes had difficulties with his neighbors, and we strongly suspect that he was a man of hasty temper, not disposed to submit meekly to injustice, one who knew his rights and was prepared to maintain them. But the grievance which he seems to have taken most deeply to heart, which was "the last straw on the camel's back," and which confirmed him in the purpose already entertained to leave Harlem, was the outrageous act of assessing him for the payment of his share toward the salary of Henry Jansen Vander Vin, the Dutch Voorleser, and for attempting to collect the money by process of law. On the 6th of March, 1677, the Mayor's Court of New York ordered that the Clerk should have his pay for his past services, and that he should be continued in office and be paid for his future services, and that if any of the inhabitants "should refuse to pay what is due from them for the time past and for the time to come, then the Constable is hereby ordered to levy the same by distress and sale of the goods for satisfaction of what is or shall hereafter become due to said Clerk."

Claude Delamater and David des Marest, Sr., were the delinquents in this matter, and they were summoned before the Town Court. Delamater stubbornly refused to pay, defying the authorities, and his goods were levied on, but for some reason the matter was not prosecuted any further. Des Marest gave them to understand that he too would hold out, if he were to remain in the place, but since he intended to remove he would pay what was demanded, which he accordingly did.

But why should not Delamater and des Marest have been assessed for the salary of Hendrick Jansen Vander Vin, the Voorleser, and why should they not have paid their shares as well as their neighbors? The plea was (and you will mark the words,) "that they of the *French congregation* in the time of Gov. Francis Lovelace, having received a preacher, the aforesaid Governor had said that the French of the town of New Harlem should be free as to contributing to the Dutch Voorleser." In the Autumn of 1676, des Marest was two years in arrears on this salary account. And thus we learn that there was a French congregation and a French preacher as early as 1674, or nine years before the Rev. Pierre Daille came to minister to the French in New Amsterdam. It also shows the attachment of these people to their mother Church and native tongue. The Dutch language was as familiar to them as the French, but not so dear, and they were ever ready to slip away from it.*

This brings us to the purchase of a tract of land on the Hackensack river in Bergen County, New Jersey, and which was known as the French patent. Des Marest proposed to establish on it a number of families of his countrymen and co-religionists from France, so that they might live in the secure enjoyment of their religious liberty, and at the same time promote their temporal welfare. Having disposed of his property in Harlem, he bought from the Tappan Indians a large tract of land lying between the Hack-

*Riker's Harlem.

ensack and Hudson rivers. The deed of conveyance bears date June 8, 1677. It was given by Mendawasey, Sachem of Tappan, Jan Claus, Seriockham, Haharios and Kassamen who signed it for themselves, and for other Indians to the number of twenty-six, who are named in the instrument, to Sir George Carteret, Lord Proprietor of the Province of New Jersey on behalf of David des Marest, Sr, and his children on payment of the following articles :

100 fathom of black wampen, 100 bars of lead, 100 fathom of white wampen, 100 knives, 15 fire lock guns, 1 barrel of powder, 15 kettles, 4 barrels of beere, 20 blankets, one saw, 20 match coates, one acker of rum, 20 hatchets, one pistoll, 20 hows, one plaine, 30 pairs of stockings, one great knife, 20 shirts, one carpenter's ax.

This land was conveyed "together with all the woods, underwoods, trees, marshes, meadows, pastures, vynes, minerals, creeks, rivers or rivulets, hawkings, huntings, fishing, and all other the commodities, benefits or improvements that are or shall [be] thereunto belonging and appertaining."*

It is difficult to follow in every particular the description of this tract as given in the deed. The Western and Eastern boundaries cannot be mistaken. The Western was the Hackensack river, the Eastern "a great mountain standing between a great swamp and Hudson's river," which must mean the Palisade range, there being no other mountain or hill of any size between these two rivers. The tract was bounded on the South by lands of Laurence Andriessen or Van Buskirk, and the dividing line was a brook called by the Indians Kessawakey, a little stream running into the Hackensack at New Bridge, and which in documents of a later date is called French Creek. This line running Eastward must have passed not far from Tenafly, and struck another stream running Northward called the Gessawaeken [Tenakill] and which turning to the West emptied into the Hackensack, "which two creeks," says the deed, "doe encompass the aforesaid tract of land." A few years later in 1683, when David des Marest petitioned the Governor's Council for the privilege of cutting timber on the part of his Indian purchase which had not been patented to him by the proprietors, he represented the tract as two miles in breadth, coming to a point, and six miles in length, which must mean six miles following the river Northward from the mouth of the creek at New Bridge.† On Ratzer's map of New Jersey made at the time of the final settlement of the boundary line between New York and New Jersey, this part of the Hackensack is called Des Marest's Kill.‡ The number of acres in the tract is not stated, but there must have been several thousand.

About one-half of this tract must have fallen within the province of New York, when, shortly after, the boundary line was run between New York and New Jersey. The boundary between these

*For copies of this deed and some other papers I am indebted to the courtesy of C. B. Harvey, Esq., of Jersey City.

†Journal of proceedings of Governor and Council of E. New Jersey, Jersey City, 1872.

‡Smith's History of New Jersey.

two provinces was not permanently fixed until the year 1769, but various lines were run at different times, causing considerable confusion in the way of collecting taxes and administering justice.* Jean des Marest and his brother Samuel and nephew David, in 1704, petitioned Lord Cornbury for an order for a survey of that Northern portion of the Indian purchase which had fallen to New York by the boundary, which, they said, had been recently made, so that it might be secured to them by patent, and they claimed that it embraced about three thousand acres. Against the granting of this petition Capt. John Berry presented a remonstrance, claiming that he had a right to two thousand acres of that Indian purchase, that he had waived his claim on condition that des Marest should bring thirty or forty families from Europe to occupy the lands, that the condition had not been fulfilled, and that he was therefore entitled to two thousand acres of the tract which was claimed by the petitioners.

The petition and remonstrance were both laid on the table, and whether subsequent action was taken by the Council, I have have not been able to learn.†

The Indian deed only extinguished the Indian title. For a good and permanent title, a quit claim deed from the Lords proprietors, successors of Sir George Carteret, became necessary. This does not appear to have been clearly understood at the time, for the des Marests took possession of their lands at once, cleared a tract at Old Bridge, built their log houses and barns, and mill-dam and mills,‡ and removed their families in the Spring of 1678, before they had any title except that which was conveyed by the Indian deed to Sir George Carteret in their behalf. It is certain that a mill-dam and at least one mill on the Western side of the river existed in 1681, for in that year the Surveyor General, Robert Vauquellen, made a survey for David des Marest, Sr., of sixteen acres lying on the Western side of the river, the Eastern boundary of which is described as the "mill and mill-dam and river." This little tract had been bought, probably near the time of the purchase of the large tract East of the Hackensack, of an Indian Sachem named Mumshaw, whose right to dispose of it was afterward (1684) disputed by another Indian named Korough. How the matter was settled we are not told, but certainly des Marest remained in possession.

At the same time (1681) Vauquellen surveyed various tracts of land for David des Marest, Sr., and his three sons, and Nicholas de Vaux, on the Eastern side of the Hackensack, extending from New Bridge northward considerably beyond Oradell, and Eastward one hundred chains or one mile and a quarter. Probably this survey was not made earlier because of the unsettled condition of the province. Sir George Carteret died in 1679 and by will

*Report of Prof. Geo. H. Cook, State Geologist, N. J., on survey of boundary line, 1874.

†Papers in office of Sec. of State, at Albany.

‡Piles belonging to these mills or to the dam have quite recently been sawed off because they obstructed navigation.

directed his property to be sold for the benefit of his creditor^s. Governor Andros of New York then claimed jurisdiction and seized and imprisoned Governor Philip Carteret. In 1681 Governor Andros relinquished his claims and Governor Philip Carteret was restored to his position. In 1682 the Duke of York confirmed the sale of the province to the twenty-four proprietors. On the 23d of March, 1682, David des Marest, Sr., petitioned the Council for permission to cut timber for the supply of his saw mill, in the parts of the land he had purchased from the Indians which had not yet been patented. The Council denied his request, but at the same time ordered that patents should be given for the lands that had been surveyed for him and his sons, manifestly referring to the surveys made the year before. The Southernmost portion of this tract beginning at New Bridge and extending Northward was patented to Jean, the eldest son, the Northernmost portion was patented to David, Jr., the second son.

A patent was furthermore granted in 1686 to David des Marest, Sr., for a tract of land embracing two thousand and ten acres, lying between the lands just named and Chesche [Tenakill] Brook, and bounded on the North by lands of the proprietors, and South partly by lands of the proprietors and partly by lands of Laurence Van Buskirk. The Western boundary of this tract was not, as is commonly supposed, the Hackensack River, but a line running North and South a little to the West of the two Schraalenberg Churches, and which was the Eastern boundary of the lands previously patented. Various claims were afterwards made to various portions of these lands, which the heirs of David des Marest, Sr., were obliged to satisfy. Besides the Berry claim already referred to, were those of William Nicolls and James Bollen. All these lands on the Eastern side of the Hackensack River were embraced in the Indian purchase, but they by no means included all of that purchase.

In 1686, the same year in which the patent for 2010 acres, East of the Hackensack was granted, David des Marest, Sr., his son Jean, Jaques La Rou, Anthony Hendricks, Andries Tiebout, John Du Rij (Durie), Daniel Ribou (Rivers), Albert Saborisco, David Ackerman, Albert Stevense (Voorhees), patented lands on the Western side of the river, extending from the vicinity of New Bridge Northward to Kinderkamack in the neighborhood of the school house, and Westward two miles to Winocksack (Sprout) Brook and below its mouth to the Saddle River.

The first house in which David des Marest resided after his removal to New Jersey was on the East side of the Hackensack and doubtless very near to his mills at the Old Bridge. He lived on that side of the river until 1686 at least. In that year, the land on the West side adjacent to the mill was patented to him, and the probability is that he at once began to build a house for himself on the rising ground a few rods from the river. He must have removed into it before 1689, for in that year he made his will in which he is described as belonging to Essex County. At that time

the Hackensack River was the dividing line between Bergen and Essex Counties. His death took place in Essex County in 1693.

The subject of the Ecclesiastical relations and history of these people is an exceedingly interesting one. They were a religious people, adherents of the Calvinistic faith and ritual and of the Genevan Presbyterian form of Government. They believed in the visible church, and a deprivation of the ordinances of public worship was with them a very serious matter. We have seen that David des Marest was at the time of his marriage in fellowship with the Walloon Church of Middleburg, that he was afterwards active in the formation of a Church of French Refugees at Mannheim, where he was associated with Nicholas De Veaux and others who subsequently came to America, that he connected himself with the Huguenot Church on Staten Island in 1663, and afterwards when he had become a resident of Harlem, with the Dutch Church of New York, though attending French services when they were introduced, in preference to the Dutch. The names of the various members of his family are found on the Baptismal and Marriage Records, and on the Register of Communicants of the ancient Collegiate Dutch Church of New York City. And so we are not surprised to learn that when the family had removed to New Jersey, one of their first concerns was to find if possible an ecclesiastical home. But there was no church in the whole province nearer to them than the Dutch Church of New York, to which they already belonged. This was nearly twenty miles distant, and the Hudson River was between them and the house of God, and that river was a serious barrier, for there was no steam ferry-boat to carry them over, nor had the horse-boat as yet appeared. No church had as yet been formed at Hackensack nor to the North, at Tappan. At Newark, which was about as far from them as New York, the settlers from New England had the Rev. Abram Pierson for their preacher and conductor of worship according to the Presbyterian order, but as he used the English language he was not competent to edify these Hollandized Frenchmen. Either French or Dutch would have answered, but not English by any means.

About the same distance from them as the church of New York, but without the Hudson river intervening, was that of Bergen, the first Dutch Church established in the province of New Jersey, and at that time the only one. This church had been organized at least as early as 1664, for its registers of baptisms, marriages, admissions of members, and burials have been kept from that date to the present with little interruption. The first house of worship was built in 1680, and was an octagonal stone building situated in the old grave yard West of Bergen avenue, and South of Vroom street. But eighteen years before that time, in December, 1662, the Schout and Schepens of the village had petitioned the Governor-General and Council of New Netherland for a minister, and in connection with their petition they gave the names of twenty-five persons who had subscribed for his support

the sum of four hundred and seventeen guilders in seawant. For some reason a minister was not settled among them for the long period of ninety-one years, when, in 1753, Rev. William Jackson was ordained the first pastor.

During the eighteen years that preceded the erection of the first church building the people worshipped in a log school-house which was on the site of the present school house fronting the square. This was the gathering place for worship for all the people in that region at the time that our Huguenots settled on the Hackensack. The church during its entire pastorless period was supplied at first occasionally by ministers from New York and other parts, but quite early a regular arrangement was made with the ministers of New York to go over at stated times to conduct the worship, preach and administer the Sacraments, and for these services they were paid by the Bergen Church. Rev. Gualtero DuBois went over three times a year for fifty-one years to perform these services. Sometimes a week day was taken for them instead of the Sabbath.*

Very promptly after their removal into New Jersey the seven adult members of the des Marest family and also Jacques La Rou on the 7th day of October, 1678, united by certificate with the pastorless Bergen Church worshipping in the log building. Dom Wm. Nienenhuisen, of New York, presided in the meeting of Consistory at the time, and received their certificates of church membership, two of which, those of Jacques La Rou, and Samuel des Marest, no doubt came from the French Church in New York.†

I would that I were able to give an authentic account of the church life and church-going habits of these people during their connection with the church of Bergen. Doubtless they were all in attendance on every Communion Day, whether it were the Lord's day or Monday. They would make all their preparations on Saturday, so that they might start early in the morning, for the distance was nearly twenty miles, and the roads were not macadamized, and the wagons were springless, and the farm horses not very fleet. Besides, it was desirable to have, after so long a journey, a half-hour's rest before service for the good of body, mind and soul. The proximity of the inn to the church customary in those days, was not an unmingled evil. Perhaps, after the services some Van Horn or Van Winkle, or Van Riper, or Van Wageningen or Vreeland, would insist on taking the company home with him to dinner, for nothing pleased the Dutchman of that day so well as to have his table crowded on a Sunday by people whom he respected. Sometimes very little of the day, especially in the Winter, would be left after the close of public worship, for the Communion service occupied hours, and then they would tarry till morning, and on the Monday wend their way homeward. They

*Winfield's History of Hudson County, page 378.

†Their names are on the record of the Dutch Church of New York, with the note "overgeschreeven aen de Franschekke," meaning transferred to the French Church.

were not so driven and hurried in their worldly business as men now are. Perhaps, they often brought their lunch with them, and having been refreshed by it, started on their tedious journey for home, which they would not reach until after nightfall. We may well believe, too, that the forests through which they passed in going to and returning from the house of God were made to ring with the Psalms of Marot and Beza.

Are we to suppose that they made this long journey every Lord's day for the purpose of hearing the Voorleser read the Decalogue, and Creed, and a chapter from the Bible and the prayers in the Liturgy, and a sermon from the pen of some famous Holland divine, and to join in the singing of the Psalms in Dutch? It pleases me to think that they did not do this habitually, but that the Senior David was like a patriarch of old, priest in his own household, and that on the Lord's day morning he was wont to call together his children and grand-children and neighbors into his own house, and opening his precious French Bible to read from it in the tongue his mother had taught him at Beauchamp. Then announcing a Psalm from Marot and Beza's version, the men, women and children would unite in its singing with uplifted voices and with all their powers. And then the Creed and prayers would be read from the Liturgy of the French Protestant Church, and perhaps also an instructive and edifying selection from the writings of some Huguenot pastor, who had, with his life in his hand, ministered to some distressed flock of Christ. Nor was the Catechism forgotten or slighted, but its questions would be duly propounded and answered. What emotions must such simple services have awakened in the breasts of the Elders, and what a powerful and healthful influence must they have exerted on the young people and children! I say again, I would that I knew how it was with them, in those times, for my picture is a purely fancy sketch.

Their connection with the church of Bergen continued about four years, during which they must have helped the Bergen people in building their first church. The last entry of a baptism is dated April 18th, 1682. But during those four years several other entries were made, one of the marriage of Samuel, the youngest son, and Maria Dreunyn, sister of the wife of Jean, the eldest son, and also of the baptisms of two children of Jean, and two of David, Jr. Also, over against the names of Marie Sobier, wife of David, Sr., and Jacomyntie Dreunyn, wife of Jean, is the word *Overleden*, or died, showing that their deaths occurred during that period. And then over against the name of David, Sr., is written the word *Vertrocken*, or removed.

What did that entry mean? Not that he had changed his place of residence, for he never did that after he had fixed it in New Jersey. It meant that he had left, or withdrawn from that particular church. And what did that mean in his case? Could it mean that he had turned back into the world, and away from the visible church altogether? No one knowing his character and history could suppose that for a moment. It could only mean that he

had left the Church of Bergen in order to become connected with some other. The word *Vertrocken* was doubtless placed by his name only, because he was the patriarch and representative of the company, and it was not worth while to repeat that word on the record.

But the question arises, what new Ecclesiastical connection could these Huguenots form in New Jersey? That they did not go back to the Dutch Church in New York is conclusively shown by the records of that church, on which their names do not reappear, nor did they unite with the French Church of that City. It was true in 1682, as it was in 1678, that there was no church in the entire province to which they could go and hear a language familiar to them, except the Dutch Church of Bergen. We can come to only one conclusion, and that is, that they withdrew from the Church of Bergen, to establish an Ecclesiastical home for themselves on their own property on the banks of the Hackensack, in which the French language should be used in the services which were to be conducted in accordance with the ritual of the French Reformed churches. This is confirmed by the concurrent testimony of many facts and circumstances.

It is true, and we must start with the candid admission, that we have no document whatever giving an account of the formation of this church, no book of minutes, no register complete or partial of baptisms, marriages, or admissions to the Lord's Supper. There is a period of fourteen years from 1682 to 1696, during which the Ecclesiastical history of these intensely church-loving people is a perfect blank so far as church records known to us are concerned. Some names of persons on the Bergen record, who were living in 1682, and who then removed, it is not said whither, re-appear in 1696 on the record of the Dutch Church of Hackensack, which had been formed in 1686.

Now what shall we, in the absence of church records say about their Ecclesiastical history during these fourteen years? There were, during these years, some marriages among the young people; four at least we are certain of among the *des Marests* alone, and births of at least fourteen children of the same name, and we may be sure that every one of these marriages was solemnized by a Christian minister, and that every child born was baptized. Now, who performed these marriage ceremonies, and who administered these baptisms, and where were they recorded? Not a church record in New York or New Jersey, containing them, can be found. Can we doubt that a French Huguenot minister performed these ceremonies right there on the banks of the Hackensack?

It is not supposed by any one that this little church ever had a pastor of its own, but that it was occasionally visited by the French ministers from New York, and especially by the Rev. Pierre Daille, whose special mission seems to have been to look after the various French settlements in the province, for the promotion of their spiritual welfare. It is a very significant fact that the withdrawal of the Huguenots from the Church of Bergen took place probably

in the same year in which Daille came to minister to the French in New York City, and in which he began to search out, and to care for the scattered flocks of his countrymen and co-religionists. What is more likely than that these Huguenots on the Hackensack should have asked for, and received a share of these ministrations? An interesting fact connects Mr. Daille with these people. Some days after the death of David des Marest, Sr., which occurred in the Summer of 1693, the two surviving sons, Jean and Samuel, and John Durie, who had married the widow of David, Jr., came together to examine his papers, and to make distribution of the property in accordance with the terms of the will. They came "lovingly and kindly" to an agreement which was put in writing, and the name of the only subscribing witness was that of P. Daille. As the beloved friend and pastor of their father, and theirs also, he had been invited to be with them on this occasion. He was doubtless on familiar ground, and in a house whose hospitality he had often enjoyed in his visits to the little flock on the Hackensack, who revered him as their spiritual father and guide.

It is moreover quite certain that they had a house of worship close by the cemetery to which we have referred. Those who in former years had charge of this cemetery have affirmed that in digging graves they have come to stones which had evidently belonged to the foundations of a building. Now what building could have been standing there in the midst of the graves but a house of worship? Tradition also says that they had a French school, a parochial school for the children, in accordance with the usage of the times.

That a building for public worship should have been provided as soon as the occasional visits of a preacher could be had, is certainly not a strange thing. It was almost necessary, certainly desirable, so that his visits might be made more frequently than they would be if the services were held in a private house. And since it was contemplated to obtain a number of families from France to occupy the lands bought from the Indians, it was important to be able to offer them the powerful inducement of a house of God prepared to receive them, and in which worship was performed in their own tongue.

The absence of church records is to be deeply regretted, but it is not surprising. What is more easily lost than are documents of this sort, and especially such as pertained to a church which never had a settled pastor, and which existed only fourteen years? Perhaps no record book was ever opened, and the visiting ministers made on loose paper, memoranda of the official acts performed by them. Who can tell what may yet come to light some day in the way of memoranda made by Daille or Peiret? When the church was finally disbanded and they who were members at the time joined the Dutch Church at Hackensack, all official papers should properly have been deposited with the Consistory of the latter church. But, it may not have been done, at any rate, no such papers are in possession of that body at the present time.

Strongly as all these considerations point to the conclusion that these Huguenots had an organized church and a house of worship on the Hackensack, there are facts still to be stated which put the matter beyond all question.

This French Church was established, if at all, about the year 1682 and when as yet, as we have seen, there was no church in the whole region nearer than the one at Bergen. But just four years after this, in 1686, a Dutch Church was formed at Hackensack only three miles distant.* Now if these Huguenots had not had a church of their own and services in their own language, would they not at once have joined this new church which was placed by their door? For four years they had been accustomed to ride nearly twenty miles to attend a Dutch service. Why then did they not connect themselves with this Hackensack Dutch Church, planted close by them, and to which their neighbors belonged? Because, we doubt not, they had provided themselves with a church edifice, and services in their own tongue which they preferred, and probably they had a preacher quite as frequently as the Dutch who had no church edifice, and who were visited at long intervals by the ministers of the word. The records of the Hackensack Church show that for ten years, from 1686 to 1696, only one person bearing a Huguenot name, Abram DeVouw, had united with it. Doubtless the French were accustomed during all those years to meet on every Lord's Day in their own house of worship, and when a minister was present, it was a day of gladness indeed.

But the breaking up and end of this little congregation were at hand. It was obliged to yield to the stern logic of circumstances. The end came in 1696. The patriarch of the colony had died in 1693. His second son, David, Jr., had died before that time. The colony was not increased by accessions of French families, for such accessions were balanced by removals. Rev. Mr. Daille removed in 1696 to Boston. The Dutch people were coming in rapidly and occupying land on every side. Their young men married the Huguenot maidens, and their young women the Huguenot young men. All the young people married, and married early. The Dutch element greatly predominated and the French preachers could not fail to see what must soon take place, and must have felt little encouragement to continue their visits which had been so welcome and precious. Cheerfully, no doubt, did they advise them to cast in their lot with a church so like their own in doctrine, order and ritual, and whose language was not strange to them, but in which they had often worshipped in New York and Bergen.

The brave little church was obliged to succumb, and it was swept by the irresistible tide of circumstances into the Dutch Church of Hackensack. The organization perished, but the members joined themselves and became elements of strength to the church then newly-formed, but which has been a noble witness for God through the succeeding generations for 200 years. They

*For an account of the organization and history of this church and a record of its members from the first, see *Historical Discourse* by Rev. Theodore B. Romeyn, D.D., New York, 1870.

joined themselves to these Dutch people, not after they had erected and paid for their church building, that thus without cost to themselves they might enjoy the fruit of the work and self-denial of their neighbors. No, they cast in their lot with them just when they were arising to build, so that they might have the privilege of sharing in the work and the sacrifice. In the walls of that first church building of Hackensack were placed hewn stones, in which were cut the initials of a number of those who were prominent in the work. These stones have been carefully preserved and placed in the walls of every church building subsequently erected by that congregation. They may be seen to-day in the Eastern wall of the "Church on the Green." On one of these stones is engraven the outline of a heart, enclosing the letters D. M. R. (Des Ma Rest) and the date 1696, on another J. D. R. (Jan Du Rij). Another has an inscription which, by a little aid of the imagination, may be pronounced the initials of Jacques La Rou.* These inscriptions show how fully these French families had identified themselves at that time with the Dutch Church, and their recognition at once as important members of it.

And to establish our position in regard to the existence of a French Church beyond all doubt, we turn to the record of communicants of the Church of Hackensack, which has been carefully kept from the time of its organization in 1686. We find on it the following entries:

1696. Op den 5 April met attestatie van de Fransche Gemeente tot ons overgekomen, dese navolgende:

Jacques Larou.

David des Marest, soon van Jan, met zijn vrouw

Antie Slot.

Marritje (Jacobse) Van Winckell, huysvrouw van Jan De Marest.

Mary de Maree, huysvrouw van Jacobus Slot.

1696, den 10 July zijn met attestatie van de Fransche tot dese ghemeente overgekomen:

Jan de Marest.

Jan DuRij met zijn huysvrouw Rachel Cresson.

David des Marest filius David, ook van weduwe Junior.

Jacob De Groot met zijn huysvrouw

Margrietie Jans.†

In these two detachments eleven members came by certificate from the French Church to the Dutch in 1696. These, doubtless, comprised the entire membership at the time. Indeed the peculiar phraseology of the record indicates that there was a coming over of

*For cuts of these inscriptions see Romeyn's discourse.

†TRANSLATION.—On the 5th of April, 1696, by certificate from the French Church which has come over to us, the following:

Jacques La Rou.

David des Marest, son of John, with his wife

Antie Slot.

Marritje (Jacobse) Van Winckell, wife of John De Marest.

Mary de Maree, wife of Jacobus Slot.

On the 10th of July, 1696, by certificate from the French Church which has come over to us:

John De Marest.

John DuRij (Durie) with his wife Rachel Cresson.

David des Marest, son of David, also of the widow of Junior.

Jacob DeGroot with his wife

Margrietie Jans.

the whole church. Henceforth for a little while the French Bible was read and the French Psalms were sung in a few families chiefly by the old people. French speedily became a strange tongue to the rising generations.

Did this French Church have a distinctive name or title? We doubt not that it was known in the neighborhood as the French Church simply, for there was no other. It was so designated, we have seen on the record of the Dutch Church of Hackensack. Mr. Riker speaks of it several times as the Church of Kinkachemeck. The authority for this is found in an entry on the marriage record of the church of Bergen. The marriage of Daniel Du Voor and Engeltie Cornelis was recorded at Bergen, February 28, 1692-3, and it is noted that they had come with testimonials from the French Church at Kinkachemeck, in the County of Bergen. But Kinkachemeck, or Kinderkamack, as the documents of the time usually have it, was then as now the name of the tract lying on the West side of the Hackensack River, and extending two or three miles Northward from Old Bridge. Du Voor went to Bergen from his home at Kinderkamack, and he belonged to the French Church. It was natural that the name of the neighborhood should on the record be joined to the church. It is certain that the church building was on the Eastern side of the river and that Kinderkamack was then as now on the Western side.

Perhaps, in my opening remarks, I spoke too disparagingly of my theme, as being of family rather than general interest. Perhaps the influence of this little colony was far more extensive and permanent than would be thought from a hasty glance at its short history.

Our historians tell us that Northern New Jersey was settled chiefly by the Dutch, and they know nothing of a Huguenot element as a factor of any importance in the population of that part of the State. But suppose that you were to-day to remove from the Northern part of Bergen County, from Passaic County, from parts of Essex, from Rockland and Orange Counties, New York, all who bear the names of the original Huguenot settlers on the Hackensack, and of those who soon after located in their neighborhood as Terheuns, Loziers, De Motts, Debauns, Ferdons, etc., you would vacate a very large proportion of the houses and farms in that extensive district. And if, in addition you were to remove all, who though bearing Dutch names, have quite as much of French as of Dutch blood in their veins, you would create a wilderness almost without inhabitants, for you would carry away the Voorheeses, Bantas, Brinkerhoffs, Blauvelts, Van Wagenens, Bogerts, Van Buskirks, Ackermans, Hoppers, about all of them.

This little colony was a permanent one. The French language passed away and the French Church was absorbed by the Dutch. The plans of David des Marest in regard to the enlargement of the colony failed, but he and his three sons came to stay, and they planned for homes for their children and children's children. Their work was never destroyed, nor were their plans interfered with by

hostile savages. They held what they had obtained at the beginning and constantly added to their possessions. The three brothers, Jean, David and Samuel, had an aggregate of thirty-four children, thirty of whom, twelve sons and eighteen daughters, married and became fathers and mothers of families which were for the most part entitled to the Old Testament benediction. The two thousand acres of the patent of 1686, as well as the lands previously secured, were speedily occupied, and to these were added tract after tract to the North and West, extending into Rockland and Orange Counties, New York, and what is now Passaic in New Jersey. Before the Revolutionary War some of the family emigrated to Adams County, Pennsylvania, joining the Conewago settlement near Gettysburg. One of these emigrants, Samuel, moved thence to Harrod's Station, Kentucky, and a considerable number of his descendants are to be found in that State. Some went from Conewago to Western New York, where many of their descendants still have their homes. One, Guillaume, who was a Loyalist, went to Canada after the Revolutionary War, and on lands granted him by the Crown, founded the town of Demorestville, on the Bay of Quinte, Prince Edwards District.

The first movement from the original home at Old Bridge was of course Eastward toward the Hudson, and so lands were cleared and farms occupied at Schraalenberg, Tenaflly and Closter, and Northward toward Tappan, and as early as 1724 it was found necessary to establish a church at Schraalenberg for the convenience of the people of that neighborhood who had been accustomed to worship at Hackensack. The names of the original members of this church were to a large extent Huguenot names, and the same thing is true of the second church which was established there in 1756. And if you were to examine the records of those two churches from the dates of their organization down to the present day, you would find in every generation, including the present, a very large proportion of Huguenot names among the baptized, the married and the communicants. And the same is to a great extent true of all the churches in that region.

The religious, moral and social influence of this Huguenot element cannot well be estimated. The descendants of these pioneers, numbering not a few thousands, have as a body been zealous supporters of the church, pure and temperate in their lives, of integrity unimpeached and honor untarnished, true in all their worldly relations, and patterns of the virtues that adorn the ordinary walks of life, and in a word, good members of the Commonwealth. It has often been remarked by strangers visiting the part of the country occupied by them, that it would be difficult to find a district of the same extent exhibiting more decided proofs of thrift, of general comfort and of contentment, and in which poverty seemed to be unknown.

Surely the province of New Jersey was not damaged by the entrance and settlement within her borders of the HUGUENOTS OF THE HACKENSACK.

APPENDIX.

I

Chronological Table.

- 1620. David des Marest (son of Jean), born at Beauchamp, in Picardy, about this year.
- 1642. David des Marest and Marie Sohier, were married at Middleburg, Zeeland, (French Church).
- 1645. Jean, son of David, born at Middleburg.
- 1652. David, son of David, born at Mannheim.
- 1656. Samuel, son of David, born at Mannheim.
- 1663. David des Marest, wife and four children, arrived at New Amsterdam, in the Bontekoe, and settled on Staten Island.
- 1665. The family removed to New Harlem.
- 1677. June 8th. Tappan Indians convey lands on the Hackensack to David des Marest.
- 1678. The des Marest families remove to their lands in New Jersey, and unite with the Dutch Church of Bergen. In the same year probably, sixteen acres lying west of the Hackensack, were purchased from the Indians.
- 1679. Sir George Carteret died. His property was to be sold for the benefit of his creditors.
- 1680. Gov. Andros, of New York, claimed jurisdiction over New Jersey, and seized and imprisoned Gov. Philip Carteret.
- 1681. Gov. P. Carteret restored; surveys of lands made for David des Marest, of 16 acres W. of Hackensack river, and of various tracts on the Eastern side for himself, his sons and Nicholas De Veaux.
- 1682. March 14th. The Duke of York confirms the sale of the Province to the 24 Proprietors. Probably in this year the Hackensack Huguenots withdrew from the Dutch Church of Bergen, and built a church for themselves, and held services in French, enjoying occasionally the visits of Huguenot preachers from New York City.
- 1686. The lands on the West of the Hackensack from New Bridge to Kinderkamack, surveyed for various parties. Also on the East of the River, 2010 acres patented to David des Marest, Sr., extending eastward to the Tenakill.
- 1689. David des Marest, Sr., makes his Will, in which he declares himself of the County of Essex, showing that he must have removed across the river after the year 1686, for the deed given him that year represents him as a citizen of Bergen County.
- 1693. David des Marest, Sr., died. Oct. 16th the heirs made a division of the property.
- 1696. The members of the French Church joined the Dutch Church of Hackensack. In this year the Dutch congregation built its house of worship.

1704. The petition of the sons of David, Sr., to Lord Cornbury, for a survey of lands. Capt. John Berry's remonstrance and claim.
1719. Jean des Marest died.
1734. A Dutch Church organized at Schraalenberg.
1738. Samuel des Marest died.
1756. Second Church of Schraalenberg (North) formed.

II

The First Three Generations of the des Marest Family in this Country.

FIRST GENERATION.

David, son of Jean des Marest, was born at Beauchamp, in Picardy, about the year 1620.

Marie, daughter of Francois Solhier, was born in Nieppe, a town of Hainault. They were married at Middleburg, on the island of Zeeland, July 24th, 1643. Their children were:

SECOND GENERATION.

1. Jean, baptized at Middleburg, in the French Church, April 14th, 1645. He married, 1st, Jacomina, a daughter of Simon Dreuns, Sept. 9, 1668. 2d. Marritje Van Winckell, widow of Peter Slot, March 23d, 1692. 3d. Magdalen Laurens, widow of Jean Tullier, December 20th, 1702. He died in 1719.
2. David, baptized at Middleburg, in the French Church, June 23, 1649. He died in infancy.
3. David, born at Mannheim, in the Palatinate, in 1652. He married Rachel Cresson, daughter of Pierre Cresson, April 4th, 1675. He died about 1691.
4. Samuel, born at Mannheim, in 1653, married Maria, daughter of Simon Dreuns, August 11th, 1678. He died in 1728.
5. ———, a child is supposed to have been born at Mannheim, in 1632, and to have died in infancy, after the family had arrived in America.
6. Daniel, born at Harlem, baptized in New York, July 7th, 1666, died January 8, 1672.

THIRD GENERATION.

Children of Jean des Marest and Jacomina Dreuns (de Ruine).

1. David, baptized in New York, Aug. 18, 1669, married Antie, daughter of Jan Slot, died before 1703. His widow married Jonathan Hart, of Southold, L. I., Sept. 7, 1706.
2. John, baptized in New York, June 18, 1671, married Debora ———. He removed to Apoughquiminy, Chester Co., Pa.
3. Mary, married, 1. ————Ely. 2. Jacobus Slot, eldest son of Peter Slot.
4. Sarah, baptized in New York, Oct. 12, 1675, married Abram Canon.
5. Simon, baptized in New York, Nov. 22, 1677. He probably died in infancy.
6. Rachel, mar. Thomas Hyer of Apoughquiminy, May 9, 1702.
7. Jacomina, bap. N. York, April 21, 1680, mar. John Stewart of Stirling, Scotland, March 29, 1700. Removed to Chester Co., Pa.

8. Lea, bap. at Bergen, N. J., April 18, 1682, mar. Abram Brower, eldest son of Peter Brower, March 29th, 1700.
9. Magdalena, mar. James Christie of Iverden, [Aberdeen?] Scotland, Sept. 8th, 1703.
10. Samuel, bap. at N. York, Nov. 13, 1687. Probably died in infancy.
11. Peter, mar., 1, Marritye Meet, May 14th, 1709.
2, Maria Batton, Oct. 15, 1721.
He had seventeen children.

1676

Children of David des Marest, Jr., and Rachel Cresson.

1. David, bap. N. York, Feb. 19, 1666, mar. Sara, daughter of Rev. Guillaume Bertholf, April 24, 1697. He died in 1768.
2. Peter, bap. N. York, April 21, 1677. Probably died in infancy.
3. Susanna, bap. at Bergen, April 7, 1679; mar., 1, Peter Lubbertse Westervelt, April 22, 1704; 2, William Teller.
4. Rachel, bap. at Bergen, June 4th, 1680, mar. Andries Janse Van Norden, Aug. 31, 1700. She died before 1710.
5. Jacobus, bap. at Flatbush, L. I., Oct. 30, 1681; mar., 1, Lea, daughter of Peter De Groot, March 8, 1707; 2, Margrietie Cozine Herring, Sept. 26, 1719.
6. Samuel, mar. Sitsche Siberse Banta, April 21, 1705.
7. Mary, mar. Wiert Banta, April 27, 1706.
8. Daniel, born in 1685; mar. Rebecca, daughter of Peter De Groot, Aug. 2, 1707.
9. Benjamin, mar. Elizabeth, daughter of Peter De Groot, Nov. 7th, 1713.
10. Jacomina, mar. Andries Louwrens Van Boskerk, Nov. 7, 1713.
11. Lea, mar. Rynier Van Houten, Jan. 26th, 1718.
12. Lydia, mar. Stephen Albertse Terheun, Oct. 18th, 1707.

Children of Samuel des Marest and Maria Dreuns (De Ruine).

1. Magdalena, bap. N. York, April 21, 1680, mar. Cornelius Epke Banta, Nov. 1, 1699. She died before 1719.
2. David, bap. at Bergen Oct. 3d, 1681, mar. Matie de Baune, daughter of Joost de Baune, Nov. 10, 1705.
3. Samuel, mar. Annatie Van Hoorn, Aug. 1, 1713.
4. Peter, mar. Margrietie Cornelise Herring, Sept. 14, 1717.
5. Jacomina, mar., 1, Samuel Helling (Helm), Nov. 10, 1705; 2, Cornelius Van Hoorn, Jr., July 19, 1710.
6. Judith, mar., 1, Christian de Baune, Jan. 29, 1709; 2, Peter Du Rij (Durie), July 21, 1711.
7. Sarah, bap. at Hackensack, March 7th, 1697, mar. John Westervelt in 1718.
8. Simon, bap. Hackensack, May 21, 1699, mar. Vrouwtie Cornelise Herring, Dec. 1, 1721.
9. Rachel, bap. Hackensack, Jan. 12, 1701, mar. Jacobus Peek, Oct. 14th, 1726.
10. Susanna, bap. Hackensack, April 18, 1703, mar. Benjamin Van Boskerk, March 21, 1725.
11. Daniel, bap. Hackensack, March 25, 1706.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 207 891 0