



Hunterdon Historical Newsletter

FALL 1979

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The Clinton Music Hall was on the second floor of this building. Note the sign by the center opening, "Moving pictures here tonight." This photograph appeared on a postcard with a 1911 postmark.

Postcard courtesy of Karen Connell

FALL MEETING

The Fall Meeting of the Society is to be held at Flemington Methodist Education Rooms on November 18, at 2 p.m. The program will present a more modern aspect of Hunterdon County's history than has been featured at past meetings.

Kenneth Stryker of Lambertville, a noted collector of early photographs of New Jersey scenes, includes also among his hobbies an interest in the sounds of music. He has a collection of tape recorded popular music of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He will share that music with us as a setting for a discourse by Jim Simpson, formerly of Pittstown and now a resident of New York City.

Mr. Simpson's talk will be on the music hall in the American scene during the "gaslight days." From the post Civil War days through World War I, so-called vaudeville or variety shows became an important chapter in our nation's history. It was during this era that the variety theater or music hall mushroomed in communities throughout our nation. The entertainment, humor, and unique properties of that type of theatrical production has somehow become a part of all of us a generation or two later.

While many towns in Hunterdon County had so-called variety theaters, one such building still in exis-

tence is the Clinton Music Hall. Our speaker has done extensive research on this hall from its beginning around 1890 through 1920. Ultimately his work will be written up and published.

Mr. Simpson was educated in Hunterdon County schools and furthered his education at Dennison University. Throughout his school days he had an avid interest in the theater. Since his scholastic days, he has pursued his early love for drama by participating in summer theater, working for the New York Shakespeare Festival in New York Central Park, McCarter Theater in Princeton and is now working for Julliard School of Music in a theatrical production management capacity.

The Society will be privileged to listen to this highly motivated young man and the toe-tapping tunes coming with out old friend, Ken Stryker.



CALENDAR

November 18, 1979: Fall Meeting

March 23, 1980: Annual Meeting

June 1980: Spring Meeting



HUNTERDON HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

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WILL INFLATION ELIMINATE SPRING TRIPS?

The Trustees, in preliminary planning for a Spring trip/meeting next June, have discovered costs may be prohibitive. We had in mind visiting a nearby Historical Society museum. Upon investigating the costs of chartering a bus and what it would cost to have lunch, added to museum entrance fees we discovered the per person charge would have to be at least \$15 for the Society to sponsor such a trip. The Society would not be making a profit on this, but only breaking even.

Before any further planning is done or a trip commitment is made we would be interested in members' comments concerning whether the cost would be too high, if not, what would be the limit? The Trustees welcome suggestions for sites to visit and/or other activities we could provide for future membership meetings. Write the Society at 114 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822 or telephone (201) 782-1091.

CONTRIBUTIONS COMING IN FOR DEATS GENEALOGICAL FILES

Contributions are still being solicited to defray the Society's expenses for the Deats Genealogical File restoration. Acid-weakened papers were copied, badly worn folders were replaced with modern hanging files and catalog cards filed for each of the approximately 1,100 family name files contained in this collection.

A contribution of \$5 will defray the cost of the materials and xeroxing costs of an average size folder. Make a donation toward this project today. You may

request that your donation be used for a specific family file. The Trustees thank the following persons who have contributed to this project since the last *Newsletter*:

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VAN SYCKLE — Douglas D. Martin
WOLVERTON/WOOLVERTON — Jeraldine G. Cook

**“SIX STOOD SIX” used in 18th Century Military size roll study**

After Mrs. D'Autrechy's article, “SIX STOOD SIX” appeared in the last issue of this *Newsletter*, the Society received a request for a copy from Professor A.T. Steegmann, Jr., Department of Anthropology, State University of New York at Buffalo. Professor Steegmann wrote that he was doing a study of 18th Century Military “Size rolls” (a unit record listing each man's name, age, stature, occupation, birthplace, and other data). A copy was sent to him and Professor Steegmann subsequently replied, “The list of recruits found therein is what I needed. It might be of interest that this group is remarkably tall, even for Americans. Most of the rolls I have checked contain only one or two six-footers out of 40 to 60 men. Thank you for sending the data; it is a real contribution to my research.”



EARLY SETTLERS OF HUNTERDON COUNTY:

THE VAN FLEET FAMILY

Continuing the series *Early Settlers of Hunterdon County*, initiated in Volume 11, Number 2 with the *Schomp Family*, and followed by the *Hummer Family* (Volume 11, Number 3), the author of these articles has selected the *Van Fleet Family*, who, like the Schomps and Hummers, left numerous descendants, including a number of our Society members. The author included sixty-five footnotes to this segment of the genealogy, which, for want of space, are deleted from the following account. One important footnote, No. 23, giving details on a contemporary Van Fleet family of Hunterdon County, is given at the end of this account for the sake of clarity. The author will be happy to supply verification of any statements given here by contacting him through the Society headquarters.

The Van Fleet name is not an uncommon one in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. Its members have attained many prominent positions, including that of Vice-Chancellor of the State. A number of the men served in the Revolutionary War, one of whom became the oldest surviving veteran in the County. The area about the present Three Bridges was once known as Van Fleet's Corner, and Van Fleet's Brook still empties into the South Branch of the Raritan River below this village.

Though the name is now invariably spelled Van Fleet, as it has been for over a century and a half, the name was originally Van Vliet. From the time the first of the name came to the New World in 1662, to the present generation, the name has experienced a variety of different spellings, including Van Vlied, Van Vleit, Van Vleet, Van Vliedt, Van Fliet, and Van Flit. The progenitor of the name in Hunterdon County wrote his name "Van Vlit", while one of his sons spelled it "Vanfleet", another "Van Fleet", and yet another "Vanvliet". As the name was initially Van Vliet, and this spelling prominently prevailed through the first four generations in America, it will be employed here, unless otherwise noted.

Frederick Van Vliet, the progenitor, was born in Ulster County, New York¹, from which he emigrated to Hunterdon County, New Jersey. His paternal grandfather, Ariaen Gerretsen Van Vliet, settled almost immediately at "the Esopus" (Ulster County)² upon his arrival in New Amsterdam (New York City) about May, 1662.³ The Van Vliet family resided at Wildwyck (Wiltwyck, later Kingston), and it was in this village that Frederick's parents, Jan Van Vliet and Judith Hussey, were married in 1684.⁴

Jan Van Vliet was born about 1650⁵ in the Diocese of Utrecht⁴, The Netherlands, the son of Ariaen Gerretsen Van Vliet, and his wife, Aegje Jans Spruyt.⁶ On 4 October 1684 the first publication of banns of the marriage of Jan to Judith Hussey was made in the

Reformed Dutch Church of Kingston.⁴ "Judich", the daughter of Frederick and Margaret Hussey, was born in Kingston⁴ and baptized in the Kingston Church on 9 October 1667.⁷ Judith was of English heritage, her father being among the twenty-five soldiers sent to Kingston by the Governor of New York in 1663.⁸ Jan and Judith (Hussey) Van Vliet first resided in Kingston, where, in March, 1685, they purchased from Jan Jacobsen Stol, of "Mombackus", a corner lot in the village for which Van Vliet agreed to pay 250 schepels of wheat through the years 1686-1687.⁹ About 1690 Jan and Judith moved to Marbletown.¹⁰ By 1712 the family was living in Rochester, Ulster County.¹¹ The Van Vliets were the parents of ten known children,¹² all of whom were born in these respective villages of Ulster County.

The fourth child and second son of Jan and Judith (Hussey) Van Vliet was named Frederick, in honor of his maternal grandfather.¹² He was born in Marbletown¹, about 1691-1692.¹⁰ The first known record of Frederick was made in 1713, when, on "16th ffebruary", the "Supervizors In Kingston" gave £5 "To ffredrick van vliet [for] 5 dayes going to ye Indians".¹³ His transactions with the once hostile Esopus Indians may have effectuated Frederick's attaining the rank of sergeant at a comparatively young age, when, in 1715 "Sergt Frederick Van Vliet" was listed among the eight officers "... of a ffoot Company of Mallitia", consisting of forty-seven men of "... the Town of Rochester under the command of Cap'n Johannes Vernooy in the Regiment of Ulster County Jacob Rutsen Coll."¹⁴

On 22 November 1718 the following marriage was performed by the minister of the Dutch Church of Kingston:

Frederik Van Vlied, j.m. [young man], born in Mormelton [Marbletown], and Merry Biks, j.d [young daughter] born in Mormelton.¹

Mary Biggs (also spelled Biks, Bix, Bigs, Bige), the wife of Frederick Van Vliet, was born in 1694, and baptized in the Reformed Dutch Church of Kingston on 16 November.¹⁵ She was the daughter of John Biggs and his wife Mary Hall,¹⁵ and was entirely English in ancestry.

Frederick and Mary (Biggs) Van Vliet were residents of the "Town of Hurley" when on "18th February 1718/19... frederik Van Vliet" was assessed £2 on his "Real & Psonall Estate... In the County of Ulster".¹⁶ By the "25th day of Jany 1720/1", the couple was living in the "Town of Marbletown", where Fredrick Van Vliet" was taxed £6.¹⁷

While residents of Ulster County, Frederick and Mary had four children, the eldest born in Hurley, and the latter three in Marbletown. All were baptized at the Dutch Church of Kingston. The following baptisms, from the Church's records, show the date of baptism, the names of the parents, the child, and the witnesses:

Frederik Van Vlied Meery Biks	9 August 1719 Jan	Henderikus Krom Dinia Biks ¹⁸
Frederik Van Vlied Meery Biks	25 June 1721 Meery	Gerrit Konstapel Elisabet Biks ¹⁹
Frederik Van Vlied Mery Biks	17 February 1723 Judik	Aldert Paling Mery Paling ²⁰
Frerik Van Vlied Mary Biks	9 May 1725 Wiljem	Wiljem Nottingham Grietjen Rutsz ²¹

At the turn of the eighteenth century there began a general migration of many of the inhabitants of Ulster County to the Province of East and West New Jersey. Among these were members of the Low, Cole, Hall, Stoll, Biggs and Crom families, who settled primarily in the Hunterdon County area of New Jersey.²² Included in these early Ulster County emigrants was Gerrit Van Vliet (1697-1777), a first cousin to Frederick Van Vliet,²³ and several members of the immediate family of Mary Biggs Van Vliet. Their former Ulster neighbors, and especially their relatives, undoubtedly influenced Frederick and Mary Van Vliet's decision to move to New Jersey. Like the others before them, Frederick and his young family traveled to New Jersey along the "mine road", now known as the Old Mine Road.²⁴

The year 1725 has been attributed as the year of Frederick Van Vliet's migration to New Jersey.²⁵ He came some time after the baptism of his son in May, 1725, at Kingston²¹, and May, 1727, when another son was baptized in Somerset County, New Jersey.²⁶

The first known record of Frederick in New Jersey is found in the "Register van Kinderen" of the "kerk up de Milston", (that is, the "church on [or at] the Millstone [River]"), in the Western Precinct (later Montgomery Township), Somerset County.²⁷ Three more Van Vliet children were baptized at this church, and in all probability the last three known children were also baptized here, but due to a hiatus in the Church records, their names were not recorded in the Book of Baptisms.²⁸ Following are the baptisms of the Van Vliet children, showing the date of baptism, the names of the parents, children, and in one instance the witnesses:

Frerik van Vliet Maria Biks	18 May 1727 William	Teunis Kool Sara Biks ²⁶
Frerik van Vliet Maria Biks	18 June 1729 Thomas	[no witnesses] ²⁹
Freerick V. Vliet Mariae Bix	11 August 1731 Frerick	[no witnesses] ³⁰

On two occasions Frederick and Mary (Biggs) Van Vliet were witnesses to the baptism of children of

"Tunis Kool" (later spelled Cole) in this Church.³¹ Tunis's wife, Sara Biggs, was a younger sister to Mary Biggs Van Vliet.³²

It is not known where the Van Vliets resided when they arrived in New Jersey. Because of their affiliation with the "kerk up de Milston" in Somerset County, and several records indicating Frederick's transactions with Somerset County merchants, it is probable that they resided in this County until 1732, when he is first known to be in Hunterdon County.³³

When the inventory of the estate of Benjamin Burt, of Somerset County, was made in October, 1732, there was included under the "List of Book Debts" for the year 1730, the name of "Frederick Fleet"³⁴ On 12 December 1732 "Frederick ffan fleett" paid £1.1.0 to one "Thomas ffinch", of the Somerset County area,³⁵ described as "a well Digher".³⁶ Edward Antill, a merchant of Raritan Landing, Piscataway Township,³⁷ gave a receipt to "Frederick Van Vlied" on 4 May 1733.³⁸ In the general store accounts of Jacob Janeway, of Middlebrook, Somerset County, "Fredrick Van Flett" paid off his £10.6.3 debt to the store "In full" on 17 January 1735.³⁹ At "Bound brook the 21 of Nov. 1736" merchant Aaron Louzada settled his account with "fredrick van fleet", when £7.12.4 was paid "in full".³⁸

The first known record to indicate that Frederick resided in Hunterdon County was in 1732, when, during the May Term of the Hunterdon County Court of Common Pleas, "Clarkson & Company" charged "F^k Van Vliet" with a "Case", amounting to £20. "Non est" was noted aside the entry in the minutes, and there is no further reference to the case.³³

Another early indication of Frederick's presence in Hunterdon County came on 17 December 1732 when "Balthes Buckel" (Pickle) gave a receipt to "Frederick Van Vliedt".⁴⁰ Buckel/Pickle was a prominent Hunterdon County resident.⁴¹

On the first day of May, 1733 "vrick van vlit", (as he signed his name), secured a mortgage from the Hunterdon County Loan Office in order to purchase a two hundred and six acre tract of land in Readington Township. The contract detailing this mortgage (Number 44) appears on page 291.

Frederick carefully paid the principal and interest on this mortgage each April for sixteen years, making his last payment on 27 April 1749 when he paid in full.⁴²

In all probability Frederick purchased his 206 acre "plantation" from Emanuel Van Etta, who bought some five hundred acres of land in Readington Township from Joseph Kirkbride in 1712.⁴³ By 1767 Frederick had augmented his property by ten acres, at which time he secured another mortgage on the land. On 11 August 1767 "Frederick Van Vleet Sen^r of Readingtown", described as a "Yeoman", obtained a mortgage from "Peter Schenk of Millstone in the County of Somerset", whose occupation was that of

Festes
James Neilson
Jonathan Davis

In 1771 "Vrerick Van Vlit, otherwise called, Fredrick Van Vleet Sen.^r of Ridington" was noted as

residing “near Estey’s Tavern”.⁴⁷ Moses Estey petitioned to operate a Tavern in May, 1767, describing himself as “an Inhabitant of the Township of Reading. . . [dwelling] on the East side of Rariton River, on the Old York Road”⁴⁸ A petition made on 11 May 1764 “to lay out a two Rod Road” in the “Township of Readingtown”, is described as running from “the South Branch of Rariton [River]. . . Untill it Comes to Jn.^O Low’s Corner, And so along the Line between. . . Lawrence Low and Frederick Vanfleet untill it Comes to the Old York Road.”⁴⁹ The 206 acre Van Vliet tract was diagonally cut through by the Old York Road on its south-western area. The present US Route

202 goes directly through the middle of the property, just west of the village of Centerville.⁵⁰

The three youngest children of Frederick and Mary (Biggs) Van Vliet, Abraham, Rachel and Leah,⁴⁵ were probably born on the Readington Township "Plantation". The parents, though residing within the jurisdiction of the "Kerk over de Noord Branch", (the Readington Reformed Church), maintained their connection with the "kerk up de Milston" until 1749.⁵¹ About the year 1747 "Phredrik Van Vliet", and "Maria Biggs, his wife" witnessed the baptism of their granddaughter, Maria, daughter of Isaac and Mary (Van Vliet) Crom, in the "Milston" Church.⁵² The genial Reformed Dutch minister, Johannes Casparus Fryenmoet, admitted "Frederick Van Vliedt en Zyn Vrou Maria Biggs", on confession, into the "Kerk over de Noord Branch" on 22 August 1749.⁵¹ Though a majority of their children were members of "Noord Branch" Church, and many of their grandchildren were baptized in this Church, Frederick and his wife are not mentioned among the records except for this one instance.

Like most of the early settlers of Readington Township, Frederick was a farmer. During the first years in which he resided in the area, Frederick was involved in various public activities of the newly formed Township. In the third known instance of a town meeting⁵³ held by "... the Inhabitants of the Townshipp of Reading on the second Tuesday in March 1734/5 [i.e. 8 March 1735] The following persons Were Chosen to Serve for officers for the said Town for the Ensuing Year". Of the two selected as "overseers of y^e high Ways", there was "Fredrick Vanvliet."⁵⁴ Thirty years later, at the "towne Meeting", held at "Riding towne", on "March the :12-1765 Frederick van Vliet was again selected among the nine "oversiers of the Roads."⁵⁵

During the May Term of 1733 of the "... Court of General sessions of the Peace and County Court for Holding of Pleas opened before his Majesties Judge and Justices of the Peace for the County of Hunterdon. . ." there was among the "Grand Jury Called over and Sworn" the name of "Frederick Vanvliet."⁵⁶ Among the freeholders of "Reading Township" selected for jury duty in 1742 was "Frederick Vanfleet".⁵⁷


The Hunterdon County Court of Common Pleas lists Frederick's name, usually as the defendant, sporadically over a forty year period.

Some time prior to June, 1741 Frederick came into debt to John Bodine. On 23 June 1741 Bodine, who resided at the "Landing" (Piscataway Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey), acknowledged that he received of "M^r Frederick Van Vliedt" the sum of £10.13.3 "By his Note payable the first of September Next."³⁵ This note, apparently not fully paid by the specified date, resulted in Bodine taking the matter before the May Term 1742 Court, when he charged "Frederick Vanvleet" with an £11 debt.⁵⁸ On 22 September 1742 Bodine's attorney, John Roosevelt,

gave Frederick a receipt for £1.12.6 "in full for the Costs accrued in an action of John Bodine Ag^t. [against] him."³⁵

A long Court battle, spanning eight years, began in August 1758, when "Frederick Van fleet" charged "John Arnwine" with a debt of £25. By November of the same year a warrant was issued for "Jn^o Erwine", and in February, 1759, "M^r Stockton", Frederick's attorney made a motion "that the Def^t. [defendant] plead in 20 days or Judgement". The May Term 1759 noted that "Arwine" was no longer a resident of Hunterdon County, and he was ordered to "give security for Costs & to prosecute before the . . . first Day of Next Term, or that a peremstory Non Suit be Entered." As "Arnwine" did not give "security for Costs" by February, 1760, the Court ordered that he be "Non Suited". After a period of six years "John Arwine" was again a County resident, and the case was reopened. The records do not give the disposition.⁵⁹

"Fredrick Van Fleet Jun^r of the County of Somerset. . . Yeoman and Fredrick Vanfleet Senior of the County of Hunterdon" signed a note on 6 June 1761 binding themselves to "Baltis Pickle of the County of Hunterdon" in the amount of £84. The next year, on 26 April, "Frederick Van fleet of the County of Hunterdon" further indebted himself to "Baltis Pickle Sen^r. of s^d. [said] County Farmer", when he signed a bond promising to pay him £44.10.10, with interest, by 1 May 1763. By 1768 Baltis, Senior, was dead, and Frederick had still not paid on the debt. Therefore, the executors of Pickle's estate, John Melick and Baltis Pickle, brought Frederick before the Inferior Court of Common Pleas "Of the Term of ffebruary" 1768. The Court ordered the Sheriff "to detain Vrerick Van Vlit otherwise Called Frederick Van Fleet of the County of Hunterdon and province of west Jersey."⁶⁰ This seems to have persuaded Frederick to honor the debt, as no further mention is made of the case.

Aside from the several Court appearances and the various services rendered the "Township of Reading", Frederick Van Vliet led the unobtrusive life of an agriculturalist in Colonial America. In 1735 he sold flax seed to the Janeway General Store,³⁹ and in 1743 paid a fee to "Doctor Reagard" for services rendered.³⁵ On 27 March 1750 he gave money to "Jonathan Ingham for fooling [fulling] of Cloth."³⁸ A mason, Thomas Martin, was given £5.17.0 by Frederick in June, 1752, for work done on his plantation.³⁸ "Ryneir Van Nest Jun^r" sold Frederick "a Rose Blanket" in 1759.³⁸ Frederick brought "A peice [of] lincey" to be fulled and dyed "a lead Colour" at the Grandin Fulling Mill in February, 1777. The material was "marked  all in one blew yarn."⁶¹

Major events of national historical importance occurred during Frederick's lifetime, some of which had a personal impact on him. In 1755-56 the French and Indian War had a direct bearing on the people of New Jersey. Due to the "most inhumane Barbarities

committed by the Indians, a faithless Enemy! and their Attacks upon the Christians attended with success, have distressed, depopulated, and lay'd waste the back Inhabitants of some of the Neighbouring Provinces, (more espeacially that of Pennsylvania)", seventy-five "Inhabitants of the Township of Reading" signed a petition which they sent to "Jonathan Belcher Esq^r Captain General and Governor in Chief, in and over his Majesties Province of New Jersey." In the document the petitioners assured the Governor of their support during the crisis, and requested that he "take the truly deplorable and distressed Condition of the Inhabitants of this Province under Your most mature, and judicious Considerations" and that he "bring into Action Ways and Means, which in Conjunction with our neighbouring Provinces and a Blessing of the Almighty may Contribute to Safety, and preserve us from impending destruction, and restore Peace and Tranquility to the Province." Signing the petition as "vrerick van vliet", the patriarch was joined by two of his sons, and two of his sons-in-law, who also signed.⁶²

At the time of the Revolutionary War, Frederick was again affected by national strife. In a petition dated 22 December 1783 and addressed to "The Honourable The Legislative Council & General Assembly of the State of New Jersey Convened at Trenton", as sent by the "Freeholders and freemen of the Township of Reading", the aged progenitor joined forty-five others in signing the "Remonstrance". Acknowledging the invaluable services rendered by the Continental Army, who "Procured that Liberty and Independance For Which We have So Long Contended," the petitioners went on to delineate "The Heavy Debt Accrued by the War." They asked that the Lesislature "Not Bring Such a heavy Burthen upon this State Who Already feel the weight of Taxes Very heavy. . ." Since Frederick was no longer able to sign his name, his son signed for him. Also signing the petition were some of Frederick's sons, grandsons and grandsons-in-law.⁶³

In 1779, when he was approaching ninety years of age, Frederick Van Vliet made his last will and testament. In it, he carefully provided for his living children, and the child of a deceased daughter. The will, which was never recorded, was as follows:

IN THE NAME OF GOD amen. I Fraderick Vanfleet of Readingtown in the County of Hunterdon in the western Division of [the] state of New Jersey though weak in body but of a sound mind & Disposing memory thanks be to God for the same Do make & ordain this my Last will & Testament and order it may be Received by all as such first & Principally I Recommend my soul to God that Gave it & my body to the Dust to be buried in a Decent manner att the Discretion of my Executors hereafter Named as for my wordly Estate wherewith it hath Pleased God to Bless me with I Do Dispose of it in the following manner Viz Whereas my Eldest son william hath had his full Divend [dividend] of my Estate I Give the Two Large augers which I Value at three pound & Two pounds Proclamation

[money] to be paid by son abram for his birth right & to my son Thomas Vanfleet I Give the Lott of Land whereon my son Fraderick Doth Live Containing Eight acres more or Less to him his heirs & assigns forever I Give to my son fraderick Vanfleet the bed whereon I Lie Together with all my wearing apparel to be Delivered to him six weeks after my Decease I Give to my son abram Vanfleet the Plantation whereon I Now Do Live Containing Two Hundred & sixteen acres to be the same more or Less Together with the remainder of my moveable Estate Not before bequeathed to him his heirs and assigns for Ever he paying the following Legacies to his three sisters & Niece I Give to mary Krum & Leah the wife of Jacobes Emans Rachel the wife [of] Garrett Lowe & to Jacobe my Grand Daughter the Daughter of my Daughter Judith to Each of them the sum of fifty Pounds to be paid to Each of them their heirs or assigns Two years after my Decease & Lastly I Do appoint my sons william Vanfleet Thomas Vanfleet and abram Vanfleet to be my Executors & Do Disanul all other former wills by me made and Confirm this to be my Last will and Testament in witness whereof I have hereunto Set my hand & seal this seventeenth Day of November In the Year of our Lord one Thousand seven Hundred and seventy Nine

Sealed and acknowledged
to be his Last will and
Testament in Presence
of us

his

Fraderick


mark

Vanfleet

benijamen van fit [Benjamin Van Fliet]
Margeret dakar [Margaret Decker]⁴⁵

As Frederick failed to provide for his wife, Mary, in his will, it is assumed that she was dead by this time. She is last mentioned as living in August, 1749, when she and her husband were received into the "Kerk over de Noord Branch."⁵¹ Frederick apparently lived out his last days with his youngest son, Abraham, to whom he left his 216 acre "plantation". Before the will was written, Abraham was already assessed as owner of the "plantation".⁶⁴ The last recorded reference to Frederick as living was made on 8 March 1784 when Ezekiel Cole, a Justice of Readington Township, entered into his docket the case of "John Stiers" versus "Frederick Vanfleet Son [of] Frederick Sen[ior]".⁶⁵

FREDERICK VAN VLIET, the son of Jan and Judith (Hussey) Van Vliet, born *circa* 1691-1692, Marbletown, Ulster County, New York; died *circa* 1785, Readington Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey; married 22 November 1718, MARY BIGGS, the daughter of John and Mary (Hall) Biggs, born Marbletown, Ulster County, New York; baptized 16 November 1694; died between 1749 and 1779, probably Readington Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey.

The children of Frederick and Mary (Biggs) Van Vliet:

- 1 i. JOHN, baptized 9 August 1719.
- 2 ii. MARY, baptized 25 June 1721; married Isaac Crom.
- 3 iii. JUDITH, baptized 17 February 1723; married Dirck Aten. WILLIAM, baptized 9 May 1725; died young.
- 4 v. WILLIAM, baptized 18 May 1727; married Mary Aten.
- 5 vi. THOMAS, baptized 18 June 1729; married Margaret Wyckoff.
- 6 vii. FREDERICK, baptized 11 August 1731; married Rebecca Du Bois.
- 7 viii. ABRAHAM, born *circa* 1733; married Ann Low.
- 8 ix. LEAH, born *circa* 1735; married James Emans.
- 9 x. RACHEL, born *circa* 1737; married Garret Low.

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTE NO. 23

Contemporary with Frederick Van Vliet in establishing the Van Vliet name in central New Jersey was his first cousin, Gerrit Van Vliet, who emigrated from New York State some time before Frederick.

Gerrit Van Vliet's large Dutch Bible was in possession of a descendant, David F. Mowen, Neshanic Station, New Jersey, in 1968, when a xerox copy of the Family Record contained therein was obtained by the author. (See: *Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey*, Volume 46, p. 21). The Bible was printed in Dordrecht by Pieter and Jacob Keur in 1736. Neatly written in Dutch are Gerrit's date of birth, death and marriage as well as the dates of birth and death of his wife, and the birth dates of their eleven children. According to the Bible, he was born at "Kingston in Esopus", (Ulster County, New York), on 27 June 1697. He was baptized 4 July 1697 in the Reformed Dutch Church of Kingston, the son of "Dirrick van Vliet" and his wife "Anna Andriessen" (KDCR:50 no. 973). Dirck Van Vliet (c.1651-c.1702) was a brother to Jan Van Vliet (c.1650-c.1722), the father of Frederick Van Vliet. The Bible records that on 3 July 1719 Gerit married "Judick van Neste". Judick/Judith Van Neste, the eldest daughter of Jeronimus Van Neste and his wife Neeltje Hendricks, was born, according to the Bible, "tot Raretan" (Somerset County, New Jersey) on 3 February 1699. On 8 March 1699 Judick became the first child to be baptized in the Reformed Dutch Church of the Raritan (Somerset County). (*Somerset County Historical Quarterly* Volume 2, p. 40).

Gerrit and Judick Van Vliet resided in "Reading Township", Hunterdon County, New Jersey. On 9 May 1727 "Daniel Worms of the County of Albany. . . New York... Cordwainer" sold to "Garret Van ffleet of the Township of Amwell", Hunterdon County, "Yeo:" [yeoman], for £55, fifty acres "scittuate on the Northeasterly side of the south [branch] of Rariton River in the Township of Amwell". On 15 July 1730 this section of Amwell Township became part of the newly formed "Township of Reading", later known as Readington. (*The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries* by John P. Snyder, (1969), p. 157). The fifty acre parcel was augmented by seventy-five acres on 15 February 1731, when "Garret Van ffleet of the Township of Reading" purchased same from Daniel Reading. (These two original parchment deeds were in possession of Paul Van Fleet, Vernon, New Jersey, in 1978, when xerox copies of each was obtained by the author).

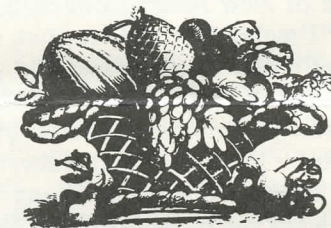
"Garret Vanvliet" of Reading Township made his last will and testament on 26 November 1767, leaving the use of his "plantation" to his wife "Judack". His sons Derick, Andris, Garret, William and Jeromas are named, as are his

daughters, Hanauchy, Neilche and Judack. (*Archives of the State of New Jersey*, Volume 34, p. 553). Gerrit died, as recorded in his Bible, on 14 March 1777. Judick Van Neste Van Vliet died 16 September 1783.

The children of Gerrit and Judick (Van Neste) Van Vliet:

- i. Dirck Van Vliet, born 5 May 1722; married Rachel Van Keuren. (*Rec.* 40:197).
- ii. Jeronimus Van Vliet, born 13 January 1725; married Annatje Schamp. (*Hunterdon Historical Newsletter*, Volume 11, Number 2, p.8).
- iii. Annatje Van Vliet, born 9 November 1726.
- iv. Willem Van Vliet, born 5 April 1729; died 17 April 1729.
- v. Willem Van Vliet, born 16 August 1730; married Adriantje Wyckoff. (*The Wyckoff Family in America*, reprint 1978, p. 21; see also: *Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey*, Volume 6, p. 125).
- vi. Gerrit Van Vliet, born 12 June 1732; died young.
- vii. Andries Van Vliet, born 6 January 1735; married (perhaps) Elizabeth Middagh (*Somerset County Historical Quarterly*, Volume 6, p. 116).
- viii. Neeltje Van Vliet, born 14 June 1737.
- ix. Pieter Van Vliet, born 29 July 1739.
- x. Gerrit Van Vliet, born 5 July 1741.
- xi. Judick Van Vliet, born 14 January 1744.

Fred Sisser, III



A HISTORY OF EAST AMWELL 1700-1800 BEING REPRINTED

In November 1977 the Society announced its intention to print a second edition of *A History of East Amwell 1700-1800*, asking members interested in receiving a copy to fill in and return a reservation form guaranteeing them the original selling price of \$13.50. The Trustees were pleased with the response and work was begun by volunteers to compile a new full-name index as well as a place name index. This is completed, all corrections have been made and Bradford Press, which prints this *Newsletter*, will be printing the book.

The Trustees are as anxious to complete this reprint as some of you are to have it. This is the third reprint the Society has undertaken and, although it tests our patience at times, too, we feel we are providing a worthwhile service by making available out-of-print books on Hunterdon County history and genealogy.

Anyone interested in purchasing a copy of *A History of East Amwell 1700-1800*, may reserve one at the pre-publication price of \$13.50 by contacting the Society.

HUNTERDON'S LAST VETERANS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

VETERAN JOHN FIDLER

The identity of John Fidler has always been clouded because in choice of occupation he has been confused with his father, John Fidler, Senior of Hopewell Township. On June 27, 1834, in the 75th year of his age, John Fidler Jr. applied for a Revolutionary War pension. Unable to attend the Court of Common Pleas "on account of his advanced age and increasing disability", he made his deposition before Daniel Cook, one of the Judges. He testified that he was born 15 Oct. 1759 in Hopewell Township where he always resided.

Two weeks before his 17th birthday, John volunteered in the Hunterdon County Militia under the command of Captain Henry Phillips for a month's tour of duty at Smith's Farm near Elizabethtown. Dysentery forced him to return home until late November 1776 — just in time to join Washington in the retreat across New Jersey. He was then a private in Captain Timothy Titus' company. John remained "in Pennsylvania until after the Battle of Trenton owing to his sickness for a few days when he again joined the same company and served three tours."

His next three months of duty were in July 1777, January and May of 1778. In June, 1778, "he joined the company of Captain Mott which was encamped at the Draw Bridge near Bordentown with the brigade of General Dickenson which was ordered there to intercept the British in their march across New Jersey after the evacuation of Philadelphia by Sir Henry Clinton and to obstruct their progress. . . from thence he marched . . . to Freehold and was engaged at the Battle of Monmouth."

He returned home in September 1778 until May 1779 when he served three more tours — at the Passaic Falls in Essex County, at Pompton, and at Flanders in Morris County "to protect the inhabitants from the incursions of the Tories and to prevent any clandestine trading with the enemy."

In November 1779 he rejoined Captain Titus' company at Maidenhead. After returning home for a short time "they marched to the Baptist Meeting House in Hopewell Township" in December remaining there until January 1780 when they marched with General Dickenson "to suppress the mutiny of the troops of the Pennsylvania Line." Altogether, he served his country two years.

The witnesses to his application were his brother, Samuel, and a friend, Uriel Titus, another veteran. The "nearest clergyman who could testify to his character" was William McLenahan, a Methodist minister who had retired to Pennington and died less than a month after testifying for John.

What John had experienced during the war may have influenced him to enter the ministry. He was admitted on trial by the Philadelphia Conference of the Methodist Church in 1784 serving an apprenticeship at the First Methodist Church of New Jersey in Trenton. He was admitted into full connection in 1786.

It has been written that John's father, John Fidler Sr., who died in 1805, was the Methodist minister. John Sr. had joined the Pennington Presbyterian Church about 1745-50 and contributed to the funds needed to build a parsonage. When there was a schism in the Presbyterian Church of America, he "seceded to New Side (Presbyterian), then to Methodists." Surely, he was one of the earliest members of the local society and may have served as a local preacher in the absence of an ordained minister. If he was 25 at the birth of his son, John, in 1759, it is doubtful that he would have chosen the demanding work of a circuit rider when in his mid 50's. A comparison of the signatures of father and son as well as deeds, mortgages, and marriage records in Hunterdon County after John Sr.'s death in 1805 definitely prove that John Fidler Jr. was the minister.

It was the custom of the Methodists to assign a pastor to a church or charge for only one year. Apparently John was stationed in Hunterdon County from 1798 to 1801 when he performed marriage services in Amwell and Hopewell Townships. He labored on the Bristol, Pa. circuit in 1801 and returned to Hunterdon County charges by 1806. He married two more couples in 1812 and 1814 in Kingwood and Hopewell Townships respectively.

At the Quarterly Conference Meeting of the Trenton Circuit held at Crosswicks in June 1806, John was an official representative of the River Class of which he and his brother, Samuel, were leading members and organizers. From the River Class, whose members lived closer to the Delaware River than to the mother church in Pennington, grew the present Titusville Methodist Church.

Very little has been discovered about John's personal life. He was married by 1790 to Rebecca (maiden name unknown) who died between 1824 and 1840. They may have had a daughter Sarah, who, with her husband, George Van Buskirk, received land from John and Rebecca in 1824 in return for "such necessities of life as will be for the comfort of John Fidler and Rebecca, his wife, during their natural lives."

In his later years, John's life must have centered around his home and community. Although his preacher's license was renewed in 1837, he probably served in a supernumerary or retired position. Reverend John Fidler, Jr., preacher of the gospel and veteran of the Revolutionary War was last mentioned in the Trustees and Stewards' Book of the Pennington Church when his absence from a meeting in 1846 was noted.

SOURCES

- Pension Claim of John Fidler #S2552
 Ege, Ralph. *Pioneers of Old Hopewell*. New York: Noble Offset Printers, Inc., 1908. Reprint, Hopewell Museum, 1963.
 O'Connell, Margaret J. *Pennington Profile*. 1966.
 Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Church.
New Jersey Archives. First Series, Vol. XXXIV. Abstracts of Wills, Vol. X, 1801-1805.
 Original will of John Fidler #2139J
 D'Autrechy, Phyllis B. *History of the Pennington Methodist Church*. Trenton: Trenton Printing Company, 1974.
 Lewis, Alice Blackwell. *Hopewell Valley Heritage*. Trenton: Parker Printing Company, 1973.
 Record Book. Pennington Presbyterian Church.
 Deats, Hiram E. *Marriage Records of Hunterdon County, N.J., 1795-1875*. Vol. 1. Flemington, 1918.
 Stewards Book for Trenton Circuit. First United Methodist Church of New Jersey, Trenton, N.J.
 Hunterdon County Deeds. Vol. 9, p. 541; 18:297; 24:198
 Hunterdon County Mortgages. Vol. 1, p. 475; 3:148; 10:166.
 Vliet, Claire Ackerman. *History of the Titusville Methodist Church*. Trenton: Trenton Printing Company, 1959.

Phyllis B. D'Autrechy



NOTES and QUERIES

Address correspondence to Genealogical Committee. Listing of ten lines free to members, non-members rate is 25¢ per line.

VAN VLEET, WILLIAMSON: Need parents of Nicholas Williamson, d. 19 Oct. 1760, Amwell, left wife Rachel. Need parents of Peter, George, Jerome and Garret Van Vleet. Parents died intestate; brothers divided land adjoining property of John Emons, Andrew Van Vleet and George and Peter Schamp in Readington. ADD: Mrs. Elizabeth F. Andersen, 41 Park Road, Maplewood, NJ 07040.

DRAKE, HUMMER: Elizabeth Hummer, b. 1820 NJ, m. in Hunterdon County 6 January 1842 Imly Drake. Who were her parents? ADD: Helen A. Kammerer, 5185 Cabot Circle, Sacramento, CA 95820.

TAYLOR, THATCHER: Would like to correspond with anyone working on 1600-1700 Taylor and Thatcher families of Hunterdon County, which include Daniel Taylor and wife Margaret Thatcher. ADD: Alana Bauman, Box 35, DeMotte, IN 46310.

HART, THATCHER: Need parents of Daniel Hart, b. 22 Feb. 1790, d. 4 Oct. 1860, Finesville, NJ; m. Nancy Thatcher. ADD: Mrs. Patricia Hart Keats, 939 Rosser Lane, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

COSAT/COZAD/COSSART, LIFLER/LEFLER/LOEFFLER: Christopher Lefler m. Mary Cosat in Lebanon Twp. 1812. He fought in Ohio Militia 1814, lived Tompkins Co., NY by 1823, settled Jackson Twp., Tioga Co., PA in 1825. Nine known children. Need info on parents, siblings. Believe father to be John Lefler/Laffar (Revolutionary War) Sussex Co., NJ, mother's name Mary _____. One brother, Jacob m. 1810 Barbara Cossart. ADD: Mrs. Grayce Harper Alsterda, 915 W. White Gate Dr., Mt. Prospect, IL 60056.

DEREMER, WILSON: Seeking parents of John Wilson, b. 1754?, d. 5 Jan. 1822; bur. Barber Burying Ground, Delaware Twp., Hunterdon Co; m. Jane, d/o Abraham Deremer. Will appreciate any information on parents and/or siblings. ADD: Jan Wilson, 328 Viscaino Way, San Jose, CA 95119.

MOORE: Need to know birthplace, parents, country of immigrant ancestor of Geroge Moore, b. 2 Dec. 1724, d. 2 Jan. 1815, bur. Spruce Run Lutheran Churchyard. ADD: Dr. George Moore, Box 227, White Stone, VA 22578.



HOW TO JOIN

Hunterdon County Historical Society
 114 Main Street
 Flemington, New Jersey 08822

Please enroll me as a member of your Society

Annual	\$9.00
Family	\$10.00
Contributing	\$25.00
Sustaining	\$50.00
Institutional	\$100.00 and up per year
Life	\$150.00
Student	\$1.00 (18 years of age or less)

for which I enclose my remittance in the amount of \$

Name

Address

Membership Report

We welcome the following new members who have joined the Hunterdon County Historical Society since June 1979:

Raymond E. Bowlby, St. Petersburg, FL
 Mrs. Ida P. Oakes, Flemington, NJ
 Dr. George Moore, White Stone, VA
 Mrs. Walter Rosett, Albuquerque, NM
 Ms. Marion W. Van Winkle, Flint, MI
 Mrs. Alice H. Branca, Silver Spring, MD
 M/M Wilson McWilliams, Flemington, NJ
 M/M John Newton Apgar, Martinsville, NJ
 Mrs. Robert H. Wilson, San Jose, CA
 Dr. Ralph Atchley, Plymouth, MI
 M/M Michael A. Porubcan, Flemington, NJ

Mrs. Paulene Stothoff
 Membership Secretary