

Sketches
Of
Allied Families

Knickerbacker – Viele

Historical and Genealogical

By
Kathlyne Knickerbacker Viele

1916

Parts 2, 3, and 4
(which focus on Knickerbocker genealogy)

This text version was re-assembled by Bryan Knickerbocker, August 2016

Part 2: The First of the Knickerbockers

The Mohawk river enters the Hudson above Albany in four branches. Lying in the fork made by the union of the northermost branch with the Hudson was a tract of arable land known in the early days of the Colony by the name of the Halve Maan.

In 1609 Hudson's Halve Maan anchored below the site of the present city of Albany, but Hudson sent a boat's crew further up to sound the river's depth. These paddled up the river to "probably some distance above Waterford," as the Halve Maan district came later to be called. (Brodhead's His. of State of New York, p. 31.)

But the tract of the Halve Maan is said to owe the distinction of bearing the name of Hudson's famous vessel to the crescent-like form of the hills on its western side rather than to the fact that it was in a sense the northerly termination of Hudson's voyage.

This tract seems to have remained in the possession of the Indians until 1664 On May 27, 1664, the New Netherland authorities granted to Pieter Pieterse Schuyler and to Goosen Gerretsen (Van Schaick) permission to purchase it from the Mohegans "in order to prevent the purchase of it by those of Connecticut." (Dutch MSS., Vol. X, p. 263.)

Eighteen years from this date, on December 11th, 1682, Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker signed a contract with Anthony Van Schaick, son of Goosen Gerretsen, deceased, "to buy and sell" some of this land "at the northern end of the Halve Maan."

At this time (1682) New Netherland had become for the second time the Province of New York. The last Dutch rule had been over for eight years. No Dutch emigrants were coming into the now English Colony. Indeed it is asserted that already in 1664 more than half the Dutch settlers had returned to their own country. How then can we account for

this belated Dutchman from Bommel of whom we find little trace in America before this date?

Family tradition says that previous to coming to America he had been in the Dutch navy, had taken part in the sea fights under De Ruyter and had been "severely wounded." It is specified that it was in the battle of Solebay, which occurred off the English coast in June, 1672, that he had been wounded—that fight where the "Hollanders fought like lions." Another engagement of this same fleet took place the following year, 1673, off the coast of Holland on the dunes at Kijk—Kijkduin (Reddings boot). This fight at Kijk was also a fierce and sanguinary naval fight between the French and English fleets and the Dutch under De Ruyter and Tromp, in which the latter were victorious. (Blok, History of the Dutch People, Vol. IV, p. 413.)

In this battle of Kijk I find the nucleus of the Knickerbacker name, as will later appear. For I believe that if there is truth in the tradition—and the dates at least make it possible—he might have been in this fight off The Hague in 1673 and have there received the wound whose scar would remain forever the honorable sign of his service to Patria !

There seems little room for doubt but that Hermen Jansen came from Bommel. He is called “Van Bommel” in the records of the City of Albany, on the Court Minutes and on the Dutch church register.

There are in the central part of the Netherlands, where Guilderland bordered in the seventeenth century on North Brabant, two towns of that name — Bommel-Zoutbommel, which was a fortified town, and Maasbommel, lying further south. Between the two there appears to have been a district of considerable extent called Bomlerswardt. It would seem that any persons living in either of these towns or in the adjacent country would call themselves “from Bommel.” In 1672-3 all this part of the Netherlands had been invaded by the French under Turenne and everywhere the land was devastated. The fortified town of Bommel sustained a long siege and at length fell into the hands of the enemy. It would appear likely that Hermen Jansen had left the navy after having been wounded, and as the conditions of continued warfare prevented a return

Page 16

to his native place, had been led to America as to a refuge. If this surmise is correct it was the fortunes of war that cast the first Knickerbacker upon these shores.

It was probably in the short period of little over a year when the Dutch held New York for a second time (1674) that Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker came to America. He would scarcely have come after it again became an English possession---a country against which he had lately been engaged in fighting. This would be quite possible if, as I am supposing, he had taken part in the battle off Kijk (1673) as well or in place of that of Solebay in 1672. It seems safe to place his coming to America in 1674, although we do not find him until six years later on the records. Up to 1680 all must be conjecture concerning him, but from this date his life is simply that of the early and successful settler in a new country, the patient husbandman, transforming his broad acres from an Indian hunting ground into a land of wheat and corn fields, with apple orchards surrounding a comfortable homestead and close to this plentiful housings for his good Dutch stock.

Hermen Jansen was evidently in America in 1678, for in that year, if not before, he married Lisbet Bogert. Lisbet was the daughter of Jan Louve Bogert, at that time dwelling at Harlem, just north of New Amsterdam. She has been erroneously assigned to the Van der Bogert family, but her descentis now well established. (Riker’s Revised His. of Harlem, p.8.) Jan Louve Bogert was from “the pretty village of Schoonderwaerth,” near Leerdam, in Holland. He had embarked from Amsterdam on April 16, 1663, in the ship “*Bonte Koe*,” of which Captain Jan Bergen was the skipper, for New Netherland with his wife Cornelia Evertse, and their two children—aged respectively seven and four years. He had settled first at Bedford, L. I., and later went to Harlem, where he became twice a magistrate and in general an enterprising citizen. In 1706 he sold his farm in Harlem and tradition says he ended in New York City a long and useful life.

The first mention to be found of Hermen Jansen on the Albany records is when “Harme Janse van Bommell” appears as witness in a trivial lawsuit, on April 6, 1680. This concerns the weakening of the testimony of one man that he was em-

played by another man to go to "the falls." These must have been the Cohoes Falls on the Mohawk, on the south end the Halve Maan, of which Hermen Jansen would have knowledge, and is therefore indirect testimony that the latter was that date living in the Halve Maan. Strange to say the plaintiff in the case, for whom Hermen Jansen was witness, was represented by Aernout Cornelise Viele, and our "Knickerbacker-Viele" association is thus early begun. (Proceedings of the Commissioners or Magistrates, 1676-80, p. 500.)

The second item on the records at Albany which refers Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker is in the early Deacon's account book of the Dutch Reformed Church at that place. May, 1682, "Hermen van Bommel . . . paid for the use the small pall," thus indicating the probable burial of a child at that time.

On December 11, 1682, he entered into a contract with Anthony Van Schaick to buy and sell land at the Halve Maan; the full text of which is here given and a facsimile of which will be found as the frontispiece to this volume:

"Albany Co. Deeds, Vol. III, p. 1770. Appeared before me, Robert Livingston, Secretary of Albany County, Renselaerwyck and Schaenhectady, etc., Antho. Van Schaick on the one side and Harme Janse Kinnekerbacker on the other, who declared that they had contracted and agreed with each other in all love and friendship as follows, viz.; Antho. Van Schayk acknowledges that he has sold and Harme Janse kinneker Backer, that he has bought from him a piece of farmland situate at the north or uppermost end of the Half Moon, over against the Skaelckookse path bounded by a small kill on the south side and by a small kill on the north side, also to the East the river and to the West the high woods being two hundred (feet) above the height of the woods, to enclose within fence and further to have free outlet for his cattle like those who live in the Half Moon. For this piece of farmland and rights aforesaid Harme Janse kinnekerbacker promises to pay to Antho. Van Shayk the

quantity of thirty good deliverable beavers and to pay this in three successive years, each year a lawful third part viz, ten beavers in January 1683/4 and ten beavers in the year 1684/5 and the last ten beavers in January 1685/6. With the last payment the seller promises to deliver to the purchaser proper transport of the aforesaid land free and unincumbered save the Lord's Right. Herewith the parties contracting acknowledge they are satisfied pledging for the fulfilment thereof their persons and property movable and unmovable present and future nothing excepted submitting the same to the compulsion of all lords, courts, laws and judges. Done in Albany in the presence of Gabriel

Thomson and Mr Abraham Van Tricht. as witnesses hereunto Invited, on the 11th of December 1682.

Anthony Van Schaick
Hermen Jansen van Wyekyback(e).

Gabriell Tomosen
Abram Van Tricht, Surgeon

In my Present
Ro. Livingston, Secr.

This document is especially valuable , for its date and for its signature; it is the only signature of the ancestor which we possess.

On the earliest list of members of the Dutch church in Albany (1683) appear the names of "Harmen Jansz Knickerbacker and Lysbet Harmensz." In this same year (1683) Hermen Jansen joins with Schuyler and two others in a petition for a road to be opened across the land of his neighbor Mees Hogeboom. On June, 1684, Knickerbacker appears in a suit with this neighbor. Concerning this suit Mr. A. J. F. van Laer, Archivist of the N. Y. State Library, writes: 'That of May 6, 1684, is an action for debt of Herman Jansen Knickerbacker, plttf, vs. Mews Hogeboom deft. (Court Minutes 1680-85, p. 535.) The same day Mees Hogeboom brought an action against Hermen Jansen Kinnekerbacker for the recovery of a heifer let out to pasture in Knickerbacker's field.

Page 19

Knickerbacker claimed that the heifer got into a bog and was killed by wolves, hence that he was not responsible. June 3, 1684, a jury brought in a verdict of not guilty. In the entry of that trial Knickerbacker is called Harmen Jansen Van Bommel." (This is the item that Dr. Van Aistyne refers to on the first page of his Knickerbacker genealogy and which he has evidently mistaken for a real estate transaction.)

In September, 1689, Hermen Jansen, whose land ran up to wards Saratoga Lake and who may have been out hunting beavers somewhat beyond his own domain, reported to the Albany authorities as follows: "Harme Janse van Bommel brings news yt our Indians have taken 5 Praying Canada Indians upon ye Lake, who were bound later to do mischieffe and that severall french were seen upon ye Lake. Upon which Capt Wendel and six men were ordered to go to Sarachtoge to examine sd 5 Indians and make inquiry of affairs there." (Annals of Albany, Vol. II, pp. 112, 113.)

On the 20th of February, 1696-7, Knickerbacker made a further purchase of land at Halve Maan from the same Anthony Van Schaick and in this deed it will be noted that he is called throughout "Harnie Jansz Knickerbacker Van Wye." This deed, of which only a copy is preserved in the Secretary of State's Office at Albany, reads as follows :—

"Albany County Deeds, Vol. IV, p. . This Indenture made ye Six arid Twentieth day of Feb. in ye year of our Lord one Thousand Six hundred and ninety six and seven in the ninth year of ye Reign of our now souverain Lord William ye Third over England etc king. Between Anthony Van Shaik of ye County of Albany Yeoman, of ye one part and Harme Janse Knickerbacker Van Wye, also of ye County of Albany yeoman of ye other part. WITNESSETH that ye sd Anthony Van Shaik for diverse good causes and lawful Considerations him, ye sd Anthony Van Shaik especially moveing and for ye further Consideration of Eighteen Pounds

Currant money of this province to hm in hand paid by ye sd Harme Janse Knickerbacker Van Wye and before ye Ensealing and delivery

Page 20

hereof ye Receipt whereof he doth hereby acknowledge and him therewith fully satisfied & Contented hath graunted, Bargained and Sold, aliened, Enfeoffed and Confirmed; and by these presents doth graunt, Bargain and sell, alien, Enfeofe and Confirm unto ye sd Harme Janse Knickerbacker Van Wye and to his heirs and assigns for ever all ye Certain Tract or Parcell of land scituate, lyeing & being in the County of Albany on ye West side of hudson's River above ye Land Commonly Called ye half moon, being about foure English miles' above ye farm or Bowery of Geurt Hendrickse, which said Land begins at ye kill or Creek that runs into hudson's River between ye, wyle vlackje and ye said Harme Jause's house and from thence along ye River northward as far as ye northermost end of a Small stonye Island which lyes on ye West side of hudson's River and strikes back from ye westward side of ye River into ye woods on ye South end along ye north side of ye said Kill or Creek so as ye same ruuns untill you come unto ye high hills which said hills runn along ye fly of ye half moon and streak as far as Sarochtoge and on ye north side from ye northermost end of ye said Stonie Island with a direct west line into ye woods till yu cometo ye sd high hills aforescl So yt ye Land is bounded on ye East by Hudson's River on ye South by a kill yt lyes to ye northward of ye wyle kill, so as ye same Runns till it comes to ye high hills and then along ye foot of ye said high hills northward till within a direct East line yt can attain ye northermost end of ye sd stoney Island lying on ye West side of hudson's River So yt ye said harme Janse's Land is arrable land lyes on ye east side of ye Road that goes to Saracktoge, and ye wood land on ye west side; Together with free grazeing for his Catle in ye woods of ye said Anthony Van Shaik as well as those yt have their farms in ye half moon, Always Exempting out of this graunt and Conveyance ye Creeks and Streams of water that are in ye said Bounds and

Page 21

nothing else, Conveying to ye said harme Janse knickerbacker van wyee al ye orchards, gardens, yards, backside Fences, ways, Easements, land, Tenements, feeding Pastures, woods, underwoods, Profits, Commodities and hereditements with there and every of there Rights, members and appertenances what soever thereunto belonging or in any manner or way appertaining or therewithal used and Enjoyed as part, parcell and member thereof, Except what is before Excepted and the Reversion and Reversions, Remainder and Remainders, Rents, Issues and Profits of ye same and of every part and parcell thereof and all ye Estate, Right, Title, Interest, Possession, property, claim, and demand whatsoever of ye sd Antho. Van shaik of, in or to ye same or any part or parcell thereof To have and to Hold ye said Tract of Land and all and Singular other ye prmises hereby graunted, Bargained and Sold with there and every of there Rights members and appertenances whatsoever Except ye Streams aforesd to ye sd Harme Janse Knickerbacker van wyee his heirs and assigns forever, yielding, Rendring and Paying yearly and every year and ye said harme janse knickerbacker van wyee for himself his heirs, Executors, administrators and assigns doth Promise, Covenant and graunt to and with ye said Antho. Van Shaik his heirs and assigns for ye sd Tract of Land yearly and every year to pay in ye month of January in ye city of albany Two Skepells of good winter wheat and Two Shillings Currant money of this Province in lieu off all quitt Rents and other services whatsoever and ye sd AnthO. Van Shaik for himself his

heirs and assigns ye said Tract and Parcels of Land and all other singular ye prmises unto ye sd harme Jans knickerbacker van wyee his heirs and assigns in there quiet and peaceable Possession and Sezen against him ye sd Antho. van shaik his heirs and assigns and all and every pson or psons whatsoever lawfully Cleyming by, from or under him or any of them shall or will warrant and forever de-

Page 22

fend by these presents. In witness thereof ye Partyes to these Presents have hereunto interchangeably set there hands and seals ye 26 of February 1696/7.

(signed)

Harme Janse knickerbacker
van wyee.

Sealed and Delivered
in ye Presence of
Jan Janse Bleecker, Justice of ye Peace
Jan Vinnagen, Justice of ye Peace.
Rt. livingston.

This deed, with its lengthened out phrases, as though theman who drew it up was paid according to the number of words he could insert, is here given in full as it shows certain facts concerning Hermen Jansen's name arid business transactions. It is unfortunately only a copy that is stored in the County Clerks office at Albany.

The clerk has evidently misread our ancestor's signature and has placed the "Van Wyee" after instead of before Knickerbacker which last he uses as the equivalent for "Kycback(e)" in the document of 1682. The deed of sale of this land ten years later to the brothers Keteihuyn (1706-7) is word for word the same as this save for the very important exception of the consideration. Hermen Jansen bought this land in 1696-7 for eighteen pounds and a yearly rental of wheat and sold it ten years later for "one hundred and eighty four pounds ten shillings current money"—proving Hermen Jansen to have been a shrewd man of business! Hermen Jansen calls himself "late of Albany County" in the deed of 1706-7.

In 1697 (June 26), a list of the "Heads of Families" in the City and County of Albany was made which contains also the number of men, women and children in each family. On this list appears the name of Hermen Jansen under the heading, "So farr in this corporation," and his family is said to have consisted of "2 men, 1 woman and four children." This corresponds with Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker's family at this time. His eldest son Johannes, aged 18 years, but yet unmarried, would be the second "man." (Mun. An., Vol. IX, p. 85.)

Page 23

In 1704, Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker, after remaining some 22 years oi; his bowery in the Halve Maan, bought land in Dutchess Co. and very soon thereafter moved to his new land lower down the valley of the Hudson. He may have been tempted by the more promising farming conditions and the milder climate. The land he bought of Hermen Gansevoort, the Albany brewer, was near Tivoli and Red Hook. When he moved his wife, his four sons and two daughters went with him—all his family indeed save his eldest son, Johannes. Since 1704 there have been no Knickerbackers in Albany Co. save the descendants

of that eldest son. Johannes Hermensen appears to have left the Halve Maan shortly after his father and to have settled for the rest of his life at Schaghticoke on land which has remained for over two hundred years in the Knickerbacker name.

The Dutchess Co. Deed above mentioned is as follows, according to the copy now in the Office of the Secretary of State in Albany:

Albany Co. Deeds, Vol. VI, p. 14: To all Christian People to whom this present writing shall come HARM EN GANSEVOORT of the City of Albany Brewer & Mary his wife sendeth Greeting;

Know you that for divers good Causes but Especially for & in Consideration of the sume of one hundred and fifty Pounds Currant money of this Province to them in hand paid at & before the ensealing and Delivery thereof by Harmen Jansen Knickerbacker of the County of Albany the receipt whereof they the said Harme Gansevoort and Mary his wife do hereby acknowledge and every Part and Parcell thereof do freely and Cleerly acquitt, Exonerate and discharge the said Harmen Jansz Knickerbacker his heirs, Executors, administrators and assigns and Every of them forever by these Presents they the said Harmen Gansevoort and Mary his wife have by virtue of a Conveyance made over by Coll. Peter Schuyler of the said City, Gentl. unto the said Harmen Gansevoort dated the 15th Day of June 1689 Bargained, Sold, alliened Released, Enfoeffed Transported and

Page 24

Confirmed & by these psents do fully, Clearly and absolutely Bargain, sell, alien, grant, release, Enfoeffe, Transport and Confirm unto the said Harmen Jansz Knickerbacker the half or moiety of a Certain Tract or parcell of Land Scituate, Lying and being on the East side of hudson's River in Dutches Co in the same Province over against the South end of Slypsteen Island, Beginning att the river side and so due East into the woods till upon a due South and North line it Reaches the Small Lake or Pond Called Waraghkameeck from thence northerly so far till upon a due E&W line it reaches over against the sawers Creek Together with all and singular the Profits, Commodities and appertenances whatsoever to the same Tract or parcell of land belonging or in any wise appertaining to or with the same now or any time heretoforebelonging or used, occupied or Enjoyed as part, parcell or member thereof with there and every of there appertenances unto the said Harmen Jansz Knickerbacker his heirs and assigns te the Sole and only Proper use, Benefit, and Behoof of the said Harme Jansz Knickerbacker his heirs and assigns forever and the said harme Gansevoort and Mary his wife doe by these presents, Promise, Covenant and Engage the sd Tract or Parcell of land and premises with thereand every of there appertanances and every part and parcell thereof unto the sd Harme Jansz Knickerbacker his heirs, Executors, adrs, or assigns in his and there quiet and peaceable Possession forever by or from other grants Conveyances whatsoever made or to be made by the sd Harmen Gansevoort and Mary his wife or their heirs or assigns. IN witness thereof the sd Harmen Gansevoort and Mary his wife have hereunto sett there hands and seals in Albany this first Day of May in the third year of her Majesties Reign. Annoqe Dom 1704.

It is agreed upon before the sealing and delivery of these Presents by the parties that the northermost Bounds of the above sd Tract or parcell of Land do

Page 25

not Infringe and Runn into into the Southermost bounds of the manner of Livingston which runs from the southermost bounds or boucht of Roeliff Johnsen's kill and from thence by a straight line to a place on the River side Called Sanskakampka which lays over against the Sawyers Creek It is further agreed that the sd Harme Jansz Knickerbacker, his heirs and assigns do pay towards the quit rent due for the sd Land for his half or moyety yearly and every year three skiple of good wheat.

(signed)

harme gansevoort seal
Marya ganesvoort seal

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of
Hend Hansen Justus
Johannes Cuyler, Justice
frans winne.

The exact position of Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker's Dutchess County tract which he purchased from Hermen Gansevoort can be seen on the map of the Manor of Livingston in O'Callaghan's Doc. His. of New York, Vol. III, p.8, as it lay along the southern limits of that Manor in what was afterwards known as Nine Partners, extending from the Hudson River to the pond east of the "Southernmost boucht of Roeliff Jansen's kill."

In the Colonial Laws of New York there is an order for mending a highway in 1721 which bears on the description of this deed. It reads: "Repair the said road to Claverack and also the King's road that leads from the southern limits to the Manor of Livingston, which comes from the meadow of Harme Kinnebacker through the four Palatine villages." (Vol. II, p. 76.) In the same volume of Colonial Laws (p. 161) there is reference in 1723 to the land of "Harme Kinnebacker deceased."

The 1714 Census of Dutchess Co., N. Y., gives the family of Hermen Knickerbacker, as consisting of one male over sixty years of age, one male between sixteen and sixty, two

Page 26

male persons under sixteen, two females from sixteen to sixty. Lawrence appears on this list with a wife and two children. (He had married Maritie Dyckman whose mother was Jannetje Viele.)

The only proof of the dates of decease of Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker and his wife comes from the Dutchess Co. Tax Lists and they have been examined at Poughkeepsie. Hermen Jansen must have died before 1717-18, for at that time "the inhabitants, Residents, Sojorney and frieholders of Dutchess Co. are rated and assesed By ye assessors Chosen for ye Same the Day of 1717/18 for ye Northy Ward viz Janu'y the 17; Name I. Wedwen Van Harmen Kneeckerbaker £20 s18 d9." In 1728-29 "Weddow of Harmen Knecker Backer is assessed for £3 c19. and in 1730-1 (Feb. 2nd) for £4 S10). This is the last time she appears on the Tax books. Her sons Lowrens and Cornelius with her for years lead the Dutchess Co. Tax lists; the tax of Lowrens increases as his mother's declines as though she made o'er property to him.

In 1707-8 Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker made his will, a copy of which is in the County Clerk's office at Albany. The following copy was sent me by Mr. A. J. F. van Laer, who kindly made it :—

“Omitting the long religious preamble the will of Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker reads as follows:

In the name of the Lord. Amen. Know all men by these presents that on this seventeenth day of January in the year of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ one thousand seven hundred and seven and eight, I, Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker of Dutchess County in the Province of New York being in reasonable health and in full possession of my mind and understanding. . . give and dispose as follows;

I order that all my just debts be paid in proper time.

It is my will and desire that my worthy wife, Elizabeth Knickerbacker shall have and enjoy the income and profit of my whole real and personal estate during my aforesaid wife's life and that at her death my

Page 27

aforesaid estate shall belong to my heirs hereinafter mentioned in manner following;

I give to my seven children lawfully precreated by my aforesaid wife to wit; Johannis, Lowrens, Cornelis, Evert, Pieter Knickerbacker, Jannetje Lansing, widow of Hendrick Lansing Jr and Cornelia Knickerbacker, my whole aforesaid real and personal estate to be divided equally among them and their heirs after the death of my said wife; on condition that none of my heirs shall have the power to sell his portion of the real estate to any one but the aforesaid Knickerbackers; only it is my will that my eldest son, Johannis shall first draw three shillings current money for his right of primogeniture without making any further claim on that account.

It is my will and desire that if before my death I happen to set off any portion of my land for one or more of my children such portion or portions shall after the death of my aforesaid wife belong to the child or children to whom I shall have set it off; providing it shall appear under my hand in presence of two or more witnesses what and how I have set it off.

I appoint as executors of this my last will and testament my aforesaid wife and my two sons, Johannis and Lowrens Knickerbacker, desiring that the fore-going shall in all respects be followed and observed. This done at my home in the aforesaid county the day and year above mentioned.”

(signed) Heerman Jansen Kynckbacker.

Signed, sealed and Declared by
Harmen Janse Knickerbacker to
be his last will and testament in
presence of us

Jan I. P. Ploeg (his mark)

Pieter P. P. Pile his mark

D'Meyer, Clerk.

(Wills in Albany County Clerk's Office, Vol. 1, pp.175-176.)

Page 28

Everything regarding the ancestor that can be asserted with any degree of positiveness has been gathered into this sketch, which with the facts and conclusions presented under the headings: "Origin of the Knickerbacker Name" and "Concerning Early Traditions, etc.," represent a careful investigation of all available sources of information. While regretting that some of the conclusions cannot claim to be final, it is at least hoped that the material is grouped sufficiently clearly as to be ready for the use of any one who may be tempted to seek further or for the fitting in of any new facts which may yet be unearthed from some musty MSS. whose contents are as yet buried in the original Dutch.

Part 3: The Origin of the Name of Knickerbacker

The name of Knickerbacker is unique. It seems safe to assert that there has never been but one family of that name. It is evident from the testimony that it is constructed out of a combination of a family name and an individual peculiarity. There has never before been offered a rational solution of its meaning.

For several years four others besides myself—all of whom have had experience in the unraveling of the origin of Dutch names—have given to this matter a good deal of thought and one theory after another has been run down without arriving at any satisfactory decision. It has been adventured that the name represented part of an old Holland family name, but all the combinations seemed far-fetched; that the ancestor's signature bore traces of lacking a syllable as would be the case perhaps in the writing of an illiterate man; but the syllable omitted could not be determined. It has been thought that the name denoted the occupation of the possessor and the Dutch dictionary has been searched for words whose combination would indicate what that was. There seems absolutely nothing to make *knickkel*-marbles and *backer*-baker—a baker of marbles, the etymology of the name. The name was never authoritatively written with "el" for the second syllable.

This suggestion is given in the third volume of Munsell's Annals, p.59; but a note to the preface of the seventh volume says that Knickerbacker "was not the original name." This statement of Munsell as to probable meaning has been widely copied.

It is probable that the name is to be read just as the ancestor wrote it at the foot of the legal document of 1682. The Dutch always signed their family names to legal documents. The late Walter Kenneth Griffin, an excellent genealogist, has

well said, "Dutch names may be puzzling but they are logical and consistent."

Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker, as he came to be called, was at first most frequently spoken of as "Hermen Jansen van Bommel." This was the name of the place in Holland that he hailed from. But to his contract with Anthony van Schaick in 1682 he signs himself "Hermen Jansen van Wyekycback(e). Why not take this just as he has written it and give it at least a logical interpretation?

Hermen Jansen came from Bommel, in North Brabant, near which there was then and had been for several centuries a branch of the ancient family of Van Wye in which the names of Hermen and Johannes were very common. As far back as the fourteenth century there was a Hermen Van Wye who was Governor of the Neder-Betuwe, where the fortified town of Bommel was situated.

The family tradition says that Hermen Jansen was in the Dutch navy, and although this has not been proven there is nothing to prevent its having been true. He is said to have been with De Ruyter's fleet in the Battle of Solebay, fought June 7, 1672, and to have been there wounded. I doubt if an unwritten tradition would have done more than have handed down the facts of his fighting and of his wound.

Therefore when I found that in the next year (1673) there had been a still more fierce and sanguinary battle fought by the same fleet under the same commanders off the Dutch dunes at a place called Kijk, I could not but note its similarity to the “Kyc” in the ancestor’s name, especially when “back” (cheek) gave such an easy reading as—Hermen Jansen van Wye-Kijk back—Kijk cheek—or cheek marked at Kijk!

In the effort to read the name, the “Wye,” which might easily be mistaken for “Nye” (it has been read in both ways by different clerks), was so interpreted and the name became Niekicbacker-Niekerbacker, from which the transition was easy to the final form of Knickerbacker.

The clerk in the first document, that of 1682, writes the name kinne ker backer. Kinneback is jawbone—kinnekycbacker—man with the Kijk-jawbone, falls into line as a suggestion, but as to form it is more far-fetched.

Page 31

There is no such name as Knickerbacker in Holland and since we have the signature of the ancestor to go by we must bear in mind that he does not call himself Knickerbacker, but “van Wyekycback(e).

It is from this signature that the origin of the name and of the man must be traced.

**List of various renderings of the name of Hermen Jansen
Knickerbacker as they appear on the Albany Records**

- 1680 (April 6) Harme Janse van Bonimell (Proceedings of the Comm., 1676, 8o p. 500).
- 1682 (Dec. 11) Hermen Jansen van Wyekycback(e); Harme Jansz Kinnekerbacker. (Albany Deeds book III, p. 170.)
- 1683 Harnnen Jansz Knickelbacker (List of Dutch church members).
- 1684 (May 6) Harmen Jansen Kinnekerbacker (Court Minutes 1680-1685 Debt).
- 1684 (June 3) Harmen Janssen van Bommel (Court Minutes; jury trial).
- 1686 (Jan’y 1) Harnie Jansz van Bommel (Dutch Church Register).
- 1688 (Sept. 8) Harmen Jansz (Dutch Church Register).
- 1689 (Sept.) Harme Jansen van Bommel (Munsell’s Annals of Albany, Vol. II, p. 112, 113).
- 1692 (Jan’y 6) Harmen Jansz and Lysbet Jansz (Dutch Church Register).
- 1695 (July 21) Harmen Knickelbacker, Lysbet Bogert (Dutch Church Register).
- 1696-7 (Feb. 26) Harmen Jansen Knickerbacker Van Wyye (Albany Indexes, Book IV, p.94).
- 1698 (March 9) Harme van Bommell, Lysbet Bogert (Albany Dutch Church Register).
- 1699 (Sept. 3) Hermen Janse, Lysbet Bogert (Albany Dutch Church Register).

- 1702 (April 19) Harme Knickelbacker, Lysbet Bogert (Albany Dutch Church Register).
- 1704 (May 1) Harmen Jansen Kinckerbacker (Albany Indexes, Book VI, p. 34).
- 1706-7 (March 15) Harmen Janssen Nyckbacker (Albany Co. Deeds, Vol. VI, p. 39).
- 1707 (Feb. 26) Heermen Jansen Kynckbacker (Wills, Vol.L, pp. 175, 178, Albany County Clerk's office).

Part 4: The Knickerbockers at Schaghticoke

The town of Schaghticoke lies in the Hoosic Valley, not far from where the Hoosic flows into the Hudson. About 1676 this fertile section, “lying on Hudson’s River on the branch that runs towards Canada,” had been vacated by its early inhabitant—the Algonquin Indians—who, after years of hostility had been at last subdued by the Mohawks and driven northward.

In this year it was taken possession of by a band of Pequots, who in their turn had been driven by their enemies from their home in New England during King Philip’s War. They came here to settle on the initiative of Gov. Andros, the then governor of the Province of New York. These Indians called themselves and their new home Schaghticoke—the place of mingling waters—for it is here that the Hoosic River and Tamhennick Creek join and flow into the Hudson. Schaghticoke is the surviving form of an Indian name of many spellings.

At the time that Gov. Andros invited the Eastern Indians to make their home in the Hoosic Valley he planted at Schaghticoke a “Tree of Welfare” as a sign of good faith.

The Indians have long passed away but the aged oak still survives though in a dying condition, a monument to the memory of the days when beneath its wide-spreading branches the red men gathered to hold their Witenagamet or Council of Peace. In 1700, when the Earl of Bellomont was governor of the Province, the Indians living on the East bank of the Hudson in their address to him thus spoke of the event which the Tree of Peace commemorated:

“It is now six and twenty years since wee were almost dead when wee left New England and were first received into this government; then it was that a tree was planted at Schaakkock whose branches has spread so that there is a comfortable shade under the leaves of it; wee are unanimously resolved to

live and dye under the shadow of that tree for you need not apprehend that thou any of our people goe out a-hunting they will look out for another country since they like that place called Schaakkook so well.”

This “Tree of Welfare,” from which the locality has obtained its pleasing name of the “Vale of Peace,” is literally the background of the Knickerbacker landscape, for it stands just back of the family homestead and was in daily view of every one of its inhabitants for many generations. It was indeed part of the family life; its enormous branches casting a shade over an acre of ground seemed to have fulfilled the hopes of the Indians who loved it, namely, that: “Ye leaves will grow so thick that no sunn at all shall shine through it.”

It appears that about 1728 some of these Indians did join their kindred in Canada and the others gradually disappeared, but until the middle of the last century small bodies of Indians continued to visit

their old burial place and Council tree. They were accompanied it is said for many years by an aged woman of the Royal race named, Bathsheba, who died in 1854 when over one hundred years of age.

As usual, the white man coveted the Indian's land, and in 1686 when Gov. Dongan gave the City of Albany its charter, he inserted therein a clause empowering the Common Council at Albany, "Att their pleasure to purchase from these Indians at Schaahtecogue the quantity of Low or Meadow land lying at a certeyne place called and known by the name of Schaahtecogue." (Weise's His. of Albany, p. 201) Ten years later, nothing having been done in this matter, Goy. Fletcher, on March, 1698, granted a patent to Hendrick van Rensselaer which permitted this last to purchase from the Indians a tract of land "by Skachkook's creek" and extending easterly by Hudson's river for six miles. As this patent embraced a portion of the land desired by the City of Albany the two parties entered into an agreement Aug. 2, 1698, whereby Van Rensselaer conveyed his patent to the city for a consideration in 1699.

It was not, however, until the 20th day of February, 1706-7, that the city of Albany exercised the rights it had been granted in 1686 and made an agreement with the Schaghticoke Indians

Page 35

whereby the latter, through their spokesmen, the two chiefs, Mashahes and Machatawe, consented to sell their land at Schaghticoke to the city of Albany in exchange for "2 blankets, 12 duffel coats, 20 shirts, 2 guns, 12 pds powder, 36 pounds lead, 8 gal of Rom, 2 casks beer, 2 Rolls Tobacca, w gal. Med era wine, & some pypes and moreover yearly to be paid and delivered unto ye sd Indian Mashahaes or his heirs in ye month of October during the Space of tenn years commencing from ye day, 1 blanket, 1 shirt, 1 pair stockings, 1 Lapp, 1 keg Rom, 3 pounds powder, 6 pounds Lead, 12 pounds Tobacco and that a writering shall be given to ye sd Mashahaes for about 12 acres of Low Land in Shaahkook at such place as ye Commonalty shall lay it out and that ye same shall be laid and Kept in fence at ye Charge of ye City on Accasion so that ye sd Mashahaes and his heirs shall Cultivate and make use thereof forever."

The Commonalty of the City of Albany in 1708 finding themselves in legal possession of this Shaahkook tract proceeded to make preparations for disposing of it to those among its citizens who might desire to settle there, and put this notice on the doors of the Dutch church: "These are to give notice that of the Lands Belonging to the Citty of albany Called Sachtekook, Eight Plantations on ye South Side of ye Creek are to be Let to farm, Each Containing five and twenty morgan or fifty acres Low Land and five morgan up Land; if therfore any Person or Persons be Inclined to farm any of ye Sd Plantations may apply themselves to Commonalty of ye Sd Citty at ye Citty hall of ye Sd Citty on ye 10 of July next at one a Clock in the afternoon when and where ye Sd Conditions how ye Sd Plantations are to be Lett Shall be made known unto them."

The conditions were as follows:

"Any Person or Persons who Shall farm any of Sd. Plantations . . . shall Pay for and in Consideration of one of ye Sd Eight Plantations unto ye . . . Commonalty . . . upon the Receipt of an Indenture which Shall be given them the first day of Sept. 1708, the Sum of fifteen Pounds Currant money . . . and Six years after the date hereof two shepl good winter

wheat off Each morgan or two acres for Ever.” Furthermore it was agreed that if the Land so acquired should not be improved upon in the space of three years it should fall again into the possession of the City and also that in case any one acquiring it should wish to sell it he must first offer to sell it to the city of Albany and only to another in case the city did not wish to purchase it back from him.

Twenty citizens responded, but of the twenty applicants eight only could become possessors, so “the Commonalty Seeing yt here are twenty Persons willing Each to have a Plantation of Sachtekook on ye aforesd Conditions, ordered ye Clerk to write Eight Billets for ye Eight Plantations and twelf Billets Blank and to Let them all draw wh they accordingly did out of mr mayor hatt and they that gett ye Billet to have a Plantation were these, viz:

Daniel Ketelhuyn
Johs Cuyler
Johs harmense
Jobs D wandlaer Junr:
Barent gerritse
Cornelis Van Buren
Korset Vedder
Dirk van der heyden.”

On August 31, 1708, these eight men received their indentures as agreed and on September 28, 1708, Rob. Livingston and two others were sent down to measure up these plantations, for which they were to be paid “Seven Shillings per diem upon their own charge.” On December 13, 1708, these eight men, all of whom had begun to farm their land, petitioned for easier terms in their payments and for exemption in case of being hindered in their farming “by ye enemy.” On January, 1708-9, five of these eight men had paid their indebtedness on their land to the city. On January 8, 1708-9, Johs Knickerbacker and Dirck Van Vechten petition for ground “on the hemacks hill at Schachtekook . . . ware a Conveniency may be found fit to erect a Saw mill on together with a Privilege to cut Saw logs within ye City bound.”

The petition was at this time referred to future consideration, but it was probably granted, since no similar application

appears on the records until 1720, and it would be the policy of the Commonalty at Albany to facilitate the building plans of the settlers at Schaghticoke. The Dutch sawed the wood for their buildings and did not as a general thing erect log houses. Thus John Knickerbacker and Dirck Van Veghten probably cut the first boards for the first homes built at Schaghticoke in 1709.

By May 28, 1709, both these men had secured land at Schaghticoke, for they, together with Johs. D. wandlaer and Daniel Ketelhuyn, “who have farmed each a farm belonging to ye Citty,” petition in behalf of ye rest of ye farmers to send some one to measure ye lots “which are lacking in proportion.” This settlement of Johannes Knickerbacker at Schaghticoke before October, 1709, is explained by the city record of that date, which says: “It was resolved yt a minute be made yt ye Commonalty of this Citty on ye 8th inst were at Scahtekook in order to lay out your hoffsteads for ye severall Tenants and to give ym their proportion of land according to a minute made in Common Council on ye 13th of December

last (1708) is performed accordingly and indentures given this day and date viz: to Johs D wandlaer Junr, Johs harmense vischer, Corset vedder, Dani. Ketelhuyn and to Johs. Knickerbacker instead of Cornelis Van Buren at his own request. Likewise to Lewis Viele instead of Dirck Vanderheyden & to Dirck Van Veghten instead of Mr John Cuyler likewise at his own request.”

This shows exactly the manner in which Johannes Knickerbacker became a settler in Schaghticoke. He was not one of those who drew one of the eight plantations, he was not even one of the twenty who originally made an attempt to secure one, but he took up the claim of the successful Cornelis Van Buren when he gave it up. (Munsell's Albany Annals, Vol. V, pp. 182-196.)

Stress has been laid on this point, as Dr. Van Alstyne in the New York Genealogical and Biographical Record for January, 1908, p. 35, Weisse in the Swartwout and Ketelhuyn Chronicles, p. 543, and J. Munsell in the preface to the seventh volume of his Annals, all three in this case confuse Johannes Hermensen Knickerbacker with Johannes Hermensen Vischer.

Page 38

In the indenture given by the Mayor, Evert Bancker, on October 13, 1709, to “Johannes Knickerbacker of the manner of Renslaerwyck miller,” he received thirty morgans in two parts. “Parcel 1. Called No 8 and No 7 contains 20 morgans adjoining on N. to lot called No 6 and on S. to No 9. Both belonging to Dirck Van Veghten and on E. to Creek called Tamhenicks Kill and on W. to the hills; Parcel 2 over on E. side of said creek 10 m. including 5m agreed upon for the hofstead adjoining on the W. the hofstead of Johannes D’Wandelaer Junior on W to Mudder creek on S. E. to hofstead of Johanis Harmense Vischer. (signed Evert Bancker and J. K. Backer.)” (Albany Co. Deeds, Book V, p. 72.)

The occupation of “J. K. Backer” is doubtless given as that of a miller because of his saw-mill.

On November 12, 1709, Johannes Knickerbacker sold some of his recently acquired land to Marten Delamont, who had married Louwis Viele’s sister Lisbeth. This deed is not recorded till February 1, 1717-R, and was signed “J. K. Backer.” We must go back for a moment to the sale by Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker of his land in the Halve Maan in 1706-7 to the Ketelhuyn brothers because of even date with this sale there is a lease which concerned his son Johannes; it reads as follows:

“Know all men by these presents that wee Daniel Ketelhuyn and David Ketelhuyn of ye Citty of Albany are held and firmly bound unto Johannes Knickerbacker of ye Colony of Renselaerwyck in ye county of Albany aforesd in the Penal sune of three hundred Sixty and nine pounds Currant money of New York for which payment well and timely to be made unto the said Johannes Knickerbacker his certain attorney his heirs and executors, administrators, assigns, wee doe hereby bynde ourSelves our heirs, Executrs and administrators and Every of them firmly by these presents Sealed with our Seals dated in Albany this fifteenth day of March in ye sixth year of his Majes Reign A.D. 1706-7.”

The Condition of ye above written obligation is such that if the above written Daniel Ketelhuyn and David ketelhuyn they or Either of them, or any of their heirs Executors, administrators doe well and Truely pay or cause to be paid unto ye above mentioned Johannis Knickerbacker his heirs, Executors, administrators or assigns the just and full sume of one Hundred Eighty and Four pounds, Tenn shillings Currant money as aforesaid vizt: Sixty one pounds, Ternn shillings on or before the first day of May one thousand seven hundred and Eight ye sume of Sixty one pounds, Tenn shillings on or before the first day of may one thousand seven hundred and nine and the sume of Sixty one pounds, Tenn shillings all Currant money as aforesaid on or before the first day of may one thousand, seven hundred and Tenn this without fraud or further delay than this obligation to be void; Else to be and Remain in full force and virtue.

Daniel Keteihuyn seal
David Ketelhuyn

Sealed, signed and delivered
in the presence of
Johannis Roseboom Justice
Johannis Schuyler, Justice
Recorded ye 15th March 1706-7

Albany ye first day of may 1708 Johannis Knickerbacker appeared in ye clerk's office and did Produce the originall Bond of Daniel Ketelhuyn and David Ketelhuyn and acknowledged to have Received from Daniel Ketelhuyn the first Paymt of ye sd Bond being Sixty one pound, tenn shillings of N. York. J say Recd by me

J. K. Backer Seal.

Albany pro may 1711.

Then appeared in the Clerk's office David Ketelhuyn and produced the orginall bond above recorded whereof the seals were torn and did declare that he had paid Johannis Knickebacker in full wherein he and

Daniel Ketelhuyn stood bound to him as witness my hand
Philip Livingston D. Sr.

(Albany Co. Deeds vol. V. p. 39.)

From these documents it would appear that Hermen Jansen Knickerbacker- when he sold this land to the brothers Ketelhuyn took from them a purchase money bond and mortgage which he had made out in the name of his eldest son Johannis and it is probable that this was a gift to Johannes to start life on.

It will be observed that Johannis Knickerbacker avoided writing his lengthy name by signing himself "J. K. Backer." This signature is written on the front cover of his family Bible. His signature to the deed of 1709 and his signature in the Bible have been placed side by side and prove to be identical. I have seen several other deeds so signed by this Knickerbacker. In 1699 an oath of allegiance to William III of England was signed by all the male inhabitants of Albany Co. over 16 years of age. On this list among

those living in the Manor of Renselaerwyck are the names of "Harme Janse" and "J. K. Backer." Who that had not puzzled the matter out would surmise that these were father and son and that their name was Knickerbacker ! (Mun. An., Vol. 1H, p. 278.)

Johannes Hermensen Knickerbacker, instead of accompanying his father and the rest of the family to Dutchess Co. in 1704-5, choose rather to seek to form a part of the new settlement at Schaghticoke, on the opposite side of the Hudson from Halve Maan. He took up land there which to-day remains in the Knickerbacker name. Johannis had married in 1701 Anna Quackenbos, daughter of Wouter Pieterse Quackenbos and his first wife Neeltje Gysbertse (Hol. Soc. Year Book, 1905, p. 2), "both born in the manor of Renslaerwyck." Anna's father had married for his second wife, Cornelia Bogert, an aunt of Johannes Knickerbacker. Johannes had probably very little chance of an education, but he writes his name boldly and it may be he had some instruction from his neighbor, Evert De Ridder, who afterwards applied for permission to teach school in Albany.

When Johannes Hermensen entered upon his life at Schaghticoke he began a career of forty years of hard struggle with

Page 41

natural conditions, never free from apprehension of attacks from the French and their Indians. No sooner had he felled the trees of the primeval forest and sawed them into rough boards in his self-constructed saw-mill and built out of them his home stead, no sooner cleared and cultivated the ground for crops, than he began to suffer from the depredations of prowling parties of the foe.

In March, 1716-7, we find the authorities at Albany demanding from the little band of settlers at Schaghticoke their yearly stipend of winter wheat for which they were in arrears (this yearly tribute gave to their possession of their land the character of a perpetual lease). In April, Knickerbacker and the rest petitioned for an abatement of their obligation, "for ye time the quiet and peaceable settlement of ye lands in their possession has been hindered by ye enemy." This was granted them for the space of three years. Later they ask for and receive another abatement for two years more, "having been hindered from improving their settlement."

Nevertheless, Johannis Knickerbacker went on increasing his estate. In April, 1720, the Commonalty at Albany appointed a Committee to see that the land at Schaghticoke which Johannes Knickerbacker and others desire to purchase from the city is properly surveyed. On the 25th of March, 1721, David Schuyler made application to the Albany authorities for permission to sell to Knickerbacker the land which he had purchased from them on February 28th of the same year, "for the sum of fifty pounds." On the 15th of March, 1727-8, Joh. Knickerbacker, Louwis Viele, Dirk Van Vechten and Johannis Groesbeck apply to the Corporation for permission to erect a saw-mill at Schaghticoke "where there is a fitt creek within the bounds of land belonging to the Corporation of the City fitt for a saw-mill and ye petitioners being inclined to build such a mill on a fall on sd creek for their use and the neighborhood."

On June 11, 1729, Knickerbacker again petitions the Common Council for more land. On Jan. 4, 1732, "Johannes Knickerbacker desired of the Board that he have the privilege of the land that belongs to this city which is bound by the W of his land of the same breadth as his land is and so running westerly

to the bridge or top of the hill for himself, his heirs and as signs . . . granted for one skiple of good wheat to begin in Jan. or Feb., 1735." On July 2, 1735, Knickerbacker effects an exchange of land with Jan Christianse. On Sept. 29, 1736, the city records say, "this day sold to Johannis Knickerbacker a certain piece or parcil of woodland . . . at Schaahkook . . . containing 12 morgan . . . beginning where the old Indian foot road what leads from Schaahkook to Twightkook meets a small run of water at the foot of the hill, etc. . . . for which said Johannis Knickerbacker agrees to pay eighteen pounds."

The last item concerning this Knickerbacker on the Albany records is dated June 20, 1743, and is as follows: "This Board ordered the clerk to draw an order on the treasurer to pay . . . Johannis Knickerbacker for his trouble to come down from Schaahkook 12s and to Anthony Bratt 9s for his trouble to fetch down said Knickerbacker."

In 1749 he died and was buried in the old Indian cemetery near the Knickerbacker homestead where the bones of so many Knickerbackers are mingled with the dust of red men who were before them owners of their lands.

Joseph Foster Knickerbacker wrote of Johannis Hermense: "He lived much among the Indians and learnt their language so that he often acted as interpreter for the Colony." In 1714, Joseph says, he was instrumental in getting a church started at Schaghticoke, where for many years thereafter the Dominies of Albany and Schenectady took turns in holding services. In that year a little wooden church was built and also a block house to which the settlers could flee on the approach of unfriendly Indians.

In 1715 Johannis Hermense was a member of Capt. John Schuyler's Co. of Albany troops (Rep. N. Y. State His., 1896-7 Vol. I, p. 461-2). Two of his brothers were this same year in the Militia of Dutchess Co. Joh Knickerbacker was still alive in 1745 when there was a most distressing attack made by the French and their Indian allies on Schaghticoke. He lived to witness, in 1746, the erection at Schaghticoke of a fort where there were stationed two companies of troops till the end of the seven years war.

At Schaghticoke, in August, 1721, there occurred unusual freshets so that three times the land was flooded; Johannes Hermense makes note of this in his Bible; it doubtless seemed to him like a visitation from God, worthy of record in the Sacred Book.

"Albany, 1721, August, three times we had high water so that much winter corn drove away and pease and oats; 11th 18th, 26th August." This in Dutch, written with his own hand, just beneath his name on the inside cover.

Johannes Hermensen Knickerbacker left surviving him three sons and three daughters. His eldest son, Hermen, was the third of his children. He was baptized Christmas Day, 1709, with Killian Van Rensselaer and his wife as sponsors.

Here is J. F. Knickerbacker's account of him:

“Hermen Jansen second was born Dec. 19, 1709. He was sent to Holland at an early age and educated at Leiden. After his return he married Gertrude Schuyler, April 10, 1730. She died May 15, 1733, aged 21 years; their only child, John Sehuy1er, died January 10, 1744.

Hermen Knickerbacker was a very benevolent and influential man. After the death of his wife and only child he lived in close retirement and died Sept. 6, 1768, leaving the bulk of his property to the son of his brother John, the only male descendant of the name in this branch of the family.”

The only marriage of Hermen Knickerbackers of which there is any trace on the records is on that of the Dutch church in Albany, where under the date of May 25, 1746, the baptism of Johannes, son of Hermen Knickerbacker and Rebecca De Wandelaer is listed. The sponsors to this baptism are Johannes and Cornelia Knickerbacker. On December 2, 1747, there was buried by that church the “child of Harme Knickerbacker.” (Hol. Soc. Year Book, 1906, p. 112; Munsell’s Albany Annals, Vol. I, p. 244.)

Joseph is wrong in saying that Hermen Knickerbacker lived in retirement after the death of those nearest to him, for the records show that he spent considerable time abroad fighting the encroachments of the French.

On November 7, 1733, Hermen Knickerbacker was an Ensign in the Albany Co. Militia, and it is likely that he remained in the service, for in 1748 the State makes payment of

Page 44

£1, 16s. “to Harme Knickerbacker for transporting troops and stores to Saratoga in June, 1746.” (Colonial Laws of N. Y., Vol. III, p. 707.) This was just after Saratoga had been burnt and the inhabitants massacred and belated efforts were being made to stave off future depredations.

In 1755 we find on a list of the officers of Albany Co. “for Saratoga and Schaghticoke” the name of Captain Hermen Knickerbacker and as Second Lieutenant of his company his brother Johannes Knickerbacker. (Report N. Y. State His., 1896-7, Vol. I, p. 758.)

They evidently did not receive their Commissions until October 20, 1757, as their names with their rank and date of Commission are on a list in this same volume entitled “A Return of the First Battalion of the Albany Reg’t of Militia whereof the Hon. Sir William Johnson Bar’t is Colonel, Albany, Sept. 6, 1762.” From this list it appears that many officers’ commissions were officially issued on October 20, 1757. It is stated by the editor that this list represents officers who had seen *actual service* and that it was one of the papers belonging to Sir William Johnson which are now owned by New York State.

In 1755 there certainly was opportunity to see active service, for the French and Indians had swooped down from Crown Point, where they had established a base, and invaded many a peaceful home between that point and Albany. In this year Johnson assembled four thousand men at Albany for the purpose of attacking Ticonderoga and Crown Point. (Williams, New York’s Part in History, p. 207.) There can be but little doubt but that our two Knickerbacker brothers were among these, as the following quotation from the Colonial Laws of New York shows: “1758. Unto Captain Harme Knickerbacker for himself and Company of Militia for several marches on the said frontier against the enemy from August in the year 1756 to the 27th of March following, by order of Col. Rensselaer as per account, the sum of £28, 8s” Further it seems evident that they took part in the siege of Fort William Henry and were

present at the time of the fearful massacre which there took place after the surrender of the English, as witnesses this further item: "1758. Unto the said Captain

Page 45

Knickerbacker for himself and company of Militia on the said frontier against the enemy when Ft. William Henry was attacked and destroyed from the 3rd to the 27th of August last, by order of Col. Rensselaer as per account, the sum of £85, 10s." (Colonial Laws of N. Y., Vol. IV, pp. 255, 256.)

In 1751 Hermen Knickerbacker was appointed Deacon of the Dutch church at Schaghticoke and remained such until 1763 when Jacob Viele succeeded him. On December, 1767, he was appointed Elder of the same and after his death in the next year his brother Johannes took his office. Hermen Knickerbacker was spoken of as "a beloved Elder." There was much dignity and some responsibility attached to these offices in the Dutch church.

Hermen Knickerbacker had, as we can read between the lines, a cultivated mind, a kindly heart and a brave spirit; educated in Leiden, a "beloved Elder," a soldier engaged in many a skirmish with the French and their Indians; "in a field covering a frontier that was constantly exposed to the depredations of the Indians and to the horrors consequent to Indian uprisings and Indian atrocities." He and his brother Johannes—later Colonel of the 14th Albany Co. Regiment in the Revolution—are the heroes of their family.

When visiting the Knickerbacker mansion a few years since, we observed a large silver platter, such as is used to take up the collection in churches, with this inscription encircling it: "Eene Gedagtenis van Hermen Knickerbacker die is overleden op den Sept A. D. 1768 Out Synde 8 en 50 jaren 8 maanden ende 18 dagen." It hung at that time in the entrance hall over the parlor doorway.

On Sept. 12th, 1768, Harmen Knickerbacker made his will, which reads as follows:

"In the name of God, Amen. I, Harmen Knicker backer of Scotta Cook, in Albany County, yeoman, being very sick, I direct all debts to be paid. I leave to my nephew, John Knickerbacker, son of my brother John, all my estate except as here given and all my lands, messuges and tenements. And he shall pay to my sister, Elizabeth Quackenboss £100., and to my nephew Derick

Page 46

Van Faiter Jr and to his sister Hannah Kip £.50. and to my brother Woughter Knickerbacker L. too., and to my sister Nealcha Knickerbacker £ 100. I give to my cousin Hannah, wife of Cornelius Van Faiter my silver tea pot and spoons. 'But it shall tarry in my house till the death of my sister Neolcha.' I leave to my cousin Hannah, wife of Lewis T. Viele six table spoons. To my cousin Hannah, wife of Egnon (Ignas) Kip 6 tablespoons. To my sister Neolcha a negro man. I make my brothers Woughter and John executors. Witnesses Johannes D. Wandelaer, Jacob Viele, Johannes S. Quackenboss." Proved Nov. 1, 1768. (N. Y. His. Soc. Abt. of Wills as corrected, Vol. VIII, p. 75.)

Two of Johannes Hermensen's daughters married. Lysbet became the wife of Sybrant Quackenbos, February 8, 1725, and Cornelia married Teunis Van Veghten February 29, 1744. Cornelia died November 3, 1761, and the bequest of her brother Hermen in '768 was therefore to her son Dirck (Dariah) and to

his sister Anna, who had married Ignas Kip only the year before. Hannah, wife of Cornelis Van Veghten, called in Hermen Knickerbacker's will "my cousin," was really his niece, daughter of his brother Woughter (Annatie Knickerbacker, baptized in Albany, November 9, 1735), and "my cousin" Hannah, wife of Lewis T. Viele, was his niece, Annatie Quackenbos (baptized January 8, 1735). The "Neolcha" Knickerbacker referred to was Hermen's unmarried sister.

Lisbet Knickerbacker and Sybrant Quackenbos had nine children and Cornelia Knickerbacker and Teunis Van Veghten had four children. (See N. Y. Gen. and Biog. Record for April, 1908, pp. 116, 118.)

Neeltje (Neolcha) Knickerbacker outlived her brother Herman but a few years and her will, which is interesting for its quaint enumeration of and disposal of the wardrobe which she had no doubt carefully preserved with true Dutch thrift, is as follows :----

"In the name of God, Amen; March 26. 1775. I, Neeltje Knickerbacker of Schaghtacook, in Albany

Page 47

County, being weak in body. I direct all debts to be paid. I leave to Dirck T. Van Veghten £25., 'to pay my funeral charges.' I also leave him my negro man 'Tom' and my negro wench 'Eve.' I leave to Teunis, son of Dirck T. Van Veghten, 'all my bedding and slabbank,' with four sheets and 3 pair of pillow cases and my plush Camlet gown, and 6 teaspoons and £10. and my chest. I leave to Cornelia, daughter of Igenas Kip £50., 'and one of my Calleeoe gowns.' If she dies without issue then to her brother Teunis Kip. I leave to Johannes S. Quackenboss £40. To Annetje, wife of Igenas Kip, my silk gown and silk quilted Petticote. To Annatje, wife of Lewis T. Viele £15. To Maria, daughter of Lewis T. Viele 'my silveret gown.' To Elizabeth, wife of John* Fort, £10. and my long cloak. To Neeltje daughter of Harme Quackenbush my double long gown. To Annetje Viele, daughter of Johannis Knickerbacker, £10. I leave the rest of my clothing to Annatje, wife of Lewis T. Viele and Annatje, wife of Igenas Kip except one Calecoe gown and my gold earrings which I give to Margarita, daughter of Dirck T. Van Veghten, to whom I leave all the remainder of my estate. I make Johannes Quackenboss and Dirck T. Van Veghten, to whom I leave all the remainder of my estate. I make Johannes Quackenboss and Dirck T. Van Veghten my executors." Witnesses John Davenport, Petrus Beniva (Bennaway) Dirck Swart. Proved before John De Peyster October 9, 1775. (N. Y. His. Soc. Abt. of Wills, Vol. VIII, p. 308.)

Note*--Should read "Hermen."

Was the negro, Tom, whom Hermen Knickerbacker left to "Neolcha" in his will, the slave, Tom, of whom so many amusing tales are told and who was so much loved in the family of which he was for 90 years the devoted servant?

One story told of Tom is that on one occasion when it became necessary to count a flock of sheep, Tom was placed at the entrance to a certain field and told to count the sheep in a loud voice as they passed by. Tom commenced in a business like manner: "One! Two! Three !" but continued, "Dar goes anudder! Dar goes anudder! Dar goes anudder!" "Stop !"

cried his master, "What do you mean by that?" "Why, massa," said Torn, "I done count no more dan tree; I tought [could but I couldn't." In that part of the Knickerbacker burying-ground where the slaves were buried there is a rude stone inscribed with the words, "Old Tom."

The two younger sons of Johannes Hermensen Knickerbacker were Wouter and Johannes. Wouter seems to have settled in Albany, in what capacity does not appear. In 1762 he had a seat in the Dutch church there.

About the date of his brother Hermen's death (1768) he was living near Fox's Creek in that town, as is shown by a resolution of the Common Council of Albany made in 1787 concerning some Tan pits which were near lots "granted to Wouter Knickerbacker and others in fee simple" on 12th Septt, 1768. (Mun. Col., Vol. I, p. 192; Vol. II, p. 305.) According to Pearson he died in Saratoga, August 8, 1797, aged 94 years and 9 months. He had three daughters who lived to maturity: Anna, who married Cornelis Van Veghten; Alida, who married Derick Van Veghten, and Elizabeth, who married Hermen Fort. His wife was Elizabeth Fonda, younger sister of Rebecca Fonda, wife of his brother, Col. Johannes Knickerbacker. . .

We have now come to Col. Johannes Knickerbacker, the Revolutionary officer as well as Indian fighter. He was born March 17, 1723, and baptized the next week on March 24th (wit.: Nicholas and Maria Groesbeck—this last his mother's sister, Maritje Quackenbos). He seems to have lived long at home as he did not marry until 1750, the year after his father's death. Then he married, as has been mentioned, a sister of his brother Wouter's wife. These two sisters, Rebecca and Elizabeth, were the daughters of Nicholas (Claes) Fonda and Annetje Marselis. Claes Fonda, Constable and High Constable in Albany (1706-7), was the son of Douve Jillise Fonda, whose father, Jillise Douvesen Fonda, was in Beverwyck as early as 1654.

We have seen that Lieutenant Johannes Knickerbacker accompanied Sir William Johnson in the expedition to "Crown Point and Ticonderoga" in 1757 and that as a member of his brother Hermen's Co. of Albany Militia he took part in the

siege of Ft. William Henry in August of that year. This is in line with the family tradition that he was "with Lord Howe at Ticonderoga." Family tradition says further that he was "attached to the staff of Lord Howe." It seems most likely that he was among the nine thousand provincial troops who in July, 1758, assembled at Lake George when—"The massacre of Fort William Henry only the year before was fresh in the minds of the men and they were eager to avenge the death of their friends and countrymen." The question as to whether Lord Howe would attach a Dutchman to his staff seems settled by the following estimate of him: "Howe was not only a fine soldier and free from the narrow prejudices so common among the British officers at that time but he grasped the Colonial point of view and recognized the worth of the men who had experience in border warfare."

On the breaking out of the Revolutionary War, Johannes Knickerbacker was made Colonel of the 14th Albany Co. Regiment composed of men from "Saratoga and Schaghticoke" and was with his regiment under Gen. Arnold at the Battle of Saratoga where he was wounded. It may be that after that he was forced to retire from active service, as Peter Yates became the second Colonel of this regiment.

The loyalty of the spirit of Johannes Knickerbacker and many another in this vicinity is shown in the wording of a paper entered in the Book of Records of the Committees of Correspondence and Safety now in the State Library, Albany, N. Y. It is called "A General Association agreed to and subscribed by the members of the several Committees of the city and county of Albany," and the date seems to be just after the Battle of Lexington and before Bunker Hill.

"Persuaded that the Salvation of the Rights and Liberties of America depends under God in the firm Union of its inhabitants in a vigorous prosecution of the measures necessary for its safety and convinced of the necessity of preventing the Anarchy and Confusion which attends a dissolution of the Powers of Government WE, Freemen, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the City and County of Albany being greatly alarmed

Page 50

at the avowed Design of the Ministry to raise a Revenue in America and shocked at the bloody scene now acting in Massachusetts Bay, DO in the most solemn manner resolve never to become slaves; and to associate under all the ties of religion, Honor and Love for our country, to adopt and to endeavour to carry into execution whatever measures may be recommended by the 'Continental Congress or resolved upon by our Provincial Convention for the purpose of preserving our Constitution; and opposing the Execution of the Arbitrary and Oppressive Acts of the British Parliament until a Reconciliation between Great Britain and America on Constitutional Principals (which we most ardently desire) can be obtained; and that we will in all things follow the advice of our General Committee respecting the purposes aforesaid—the Preservation of Peace and Good Order and the Safety of Individuals and Private Property." Signed by John Knickerbacker, Isaac D. Fonda & sixty six others.

In line with this declaration is the following letter, issued early in 1776 by Col. John Knickerbacker to all company commanders of the 14th Albany Co. Regiment, of which he had been placed in command:

"Schactikook, May 30, 1776.—Captain John Snyder, or the next Commanding Officer at Tomhanick. Dear Sir: By order of Gen. TenBroeck, it is now become my duty as we do not know how soon the country may call upon us for military service to earnestly recommend it unto you to use your utmost endeavour with the Company under your command, as well as officers as privates, that they shall pay due obedience and strictly observe the rules and orders for regulating the militia of the Colony of New York, recommended by the Provincial Congress the 22nd day of August and the 20th day of December last; and in particular, the 6th, 7th and 8th sections of said rules and orders. If you or any of your officers have not the printed rules, they may be furnished them by applying unto Mathew

Visher, esq., secretary of the committee for the city and county of Albany. And also I desire that you furnish me with a list of the company under your command by the the 5th day of June next, and inform me in what manner the men are equipped as to arms, ammunition and accoutrements. I am your most truly humble servant,

John Knickerbacker.”

These papers testify to the Knickerbacker share in the days of travail which were to bring forth a Republic. No Americans had inherited a more thoroughly Republican spirit than those whose fathers had come from the land of William the Silent.

This is J. F. Knickerbacker's account of his great grandfather: "He was engaged in several of the Indian wars of the Colony and was attached to the staff of Lord Howe in the expedition against Ticonderoga in 1758. He was Commissioned Colonel October 20, 1775, and fought under General Arnold at the Battle of Saratoga where he was wounded in the right arm. He was a member of the State Legislature in 1792 and died August 16th, 1802."

The present register of the Dutch church at Schaghticoke begins with the date of marriage of Col. Knickerbacker taken from some older book saying that he was married by Rev. Theo. Frielinghuysen and that his wife was the daughter of Col. Claes Fonda. No military record higher than that of sergeant seems attached to the name of Claes Fonda, but he was Constable in Albany in 1706 and High Constable the following year, so perhaps "Col." should read "Con." Of Rebecca Fonda the church record states that her life was full of "good works and almsdeeds which she did." The stones of both these excellent people are in good order over their graves in the family grave yard at Schaghticoke, close to a quiet road which is too far from the center of things to be much of a thoroughfare.

The Dutch Bible of Col. Johannes Knickerbacker with records written in by himself, is now safely deposited in the N. Y. State Library at Albany. The twin daughters whose names are inscribed therein as born in 1754 were buried according to

the list of burials of the Dutch church at Albany, the one March 4, 1756, and the other October 2, 1757.

Occasionally the real estate transactions of Col. Knickerbacker and those of his son, who until his father's death in 1802 wrote his name "John Knickerbacker, Jr.," are confused. In 1753 (Dec. 11), for instance, when Johannis Knickerbacker, Jr., is said to have made application for a piece of woodland of about 20 morgans lying "within the bounds of Schagkook along the river adjoining the land of his brother Harme Knickerbacker," for which he agrees to pay to the City of Albany £.20. (Mun. Col., Vol. I, pp. 85-7.) At this date the "Junior" was only two years old.

Later will be presented an agreement of the two Knickerbackers, father and son, with the Albany Common Council, which would seem to indicate that they purchased a release from the perpetual lease clause which encumbered their property.

We have now reached the record of John, only son of Johannes Knickerbacker, who in his long life (1751-1827) reaped the benefits which settled down over the land after the Revolution and gave the people a chance to prosper after more than a century of intermittent warfare.

The hopes not only of his parents, but of his childless uncle Hermen as well, were centred in John Knickerbacker, Jr. He was given every advantage of education and contemplated the study of the law, if he had not already begun to read it, when at the age of eighteen he inherited his uncle Hermen's old Knickerbacker mansion and its broad acres. The next year he married Elizabeth Winne and soon settled down to the care of his estate. Elizabeth Winne was at the time of her marriage scarcely seventeen. This couple lived together fifty-seven years and had fourteen children, eleven of whom survived them. Elizabeth was the daughter of Captain William Winne of Albany and his wife, Maria De Wandelaer.

In 1770 "Elizabeth Johs Knickerbacker, Jr.," occupied Pew No. 19 in the women's seats of the Albany Dutch church.

In this same year (1770) John Knickerbacker, Jr., only nineteen years of age, but already married and in possession of the estate of his uncle Hermen, made the remarkable agreement with

Page 53

the Albany Common Council that he would entertain the whole of the Common Council whenever they saw fit to hold a meet-for their convenience at Schaghticoke for a generous consideration. At a meeting of the Corporation held at Schaghticoke on Wednesday July 1th, 1770, it was resolved to grant "to John Knickerbacker all the land which has not heretofor been sold or released by the Corporation at Albany lying on the east side and adjoining to Hudson's River within the following bounds viz: Beginning at a marked White Oak tree standing on the northeast corner of a parcel of Land of him the sd Joh. Knickerbacker lying near the river and to run from the sd Oak tree westerly along the sd parcel to the river then southerly along the River to the southerly bounds of the Land released by the sd Corporation to Lewis Van Antwerp, then easterly along sd Van Antwerp's Land to the land heretofor released to John Knickerbacker, then southerly along the western bounds of the sd mentioned land to the southwest corner thereof, then easterly along the sd mentioned land to the edge of the first hill there, then Northerly along the edge of said hill to opposite the sd Oake Tree the place where it first began, and then to sd Tree; for which the sd Knickerbacker is to find the said Corporation and their Successors with Meet, Drink and Lodging once a year at his House at Schactacoolc" (Mun. Col., Vol. I., p. 215.)

The next year in accordance with this resolution an Indenture was made and concluded on the 8th day of February, 1771, "Between the Mayor, Alderman and Commonalty of the City of Albany of the one part and John Knickerbacker Junior of Schaghticoke of the other part, Witnesseth that the said Mayor, etc., for and in consideration of the sum of five shillings current money of the Province of New York but more especially for and in consideration of the covenants and agreements hereinafter reserved and continued to be performed and kept on the part and behalf of the said John Knickerbacker Junior have granted, bargained . . . unto the said John Knickerbacker all that certain tract lying and being at Schaghticoke . . . Upon condition . . . that the said John Knickerbacker his heirs and assigns shall and will well and truly, from time to time and at all times ever hereafter during the continuance of this grant find, supply and provide the said Mayor, Recorder,

Aldermen and Commonalty of the said City of Albany . . .or any committee they may send to Schaghticoke at his house at Schaghticoke . . . during their or any of their stay with sufficient meat, drink and lodgng for men and horses . . . and keep their horses with good grain hay or good pasture . . . (signed by) Abrm. C. Cuyler, Mayor in the presence of Peter P. Schuyler and John J. Bleecker.”

This grant was for three hundred and fifty-nine acres.

In 1774 (August 12th) the Common Council met “at the House of John Knickerbacker at Schackook.” In 1780 a resolution of the Council reads: “Resolved that a Board be opened at the house of John Knickerbacker Jr at Schaghticoke on Wednesday the 20th Inst.” (Mun. Albany Col., Vol. I., pp.264, 309.)

In 1782 an item of the Albany city records reads: “This day agreed with John Knickerbacker Jur Esqr for the rents due and to become due on his Farm at Schaghtekocke for £.351. £.300. thereof to be paid in cash and to execute a Bond for the residue payable the first day of May next.. Resolved that the clerk draw the release of the said rents and bonds.” (Mun. Col., Vol. I., p. 340.)

On June 22 of this same year it was resolved by the Common Council “that the Public seal be affixed to a Deed of this Board to John Knickerbacker Junr for the acquittance of an annual rent. Also that the Deed from this Board to John Knickerbacker be executed in like manner for an annual rent of andthat the said several deeds be entered on record.

Statement of the *consideration money* for which the above deeds were executed:

- 1. John Knickerbacker Junr £322 ;1
- 2. John Knickerbacker Sr. £. 70 ;4
- £392 ;5

which was settled as follows to wit;

Leanard Gansvort gave us Cr on bond for	£240 ;6;0
The treasurer received this day	<u>22;1;6</u>
	£262 ;7;6

Knickerbacker Junr gave his obligation pay 1, August for	78;12;6
Also for £51 pay 1,May next	<u>51 ;0;0</u>
	£.392 ;0;0

This I take to mean that the two Knickerbackers bought a release from the yearly rental demanded by the city of Albany on their land and thus owned their land clear of any lien.

It will be observed that the value of the son’s land far exceeded that of his father.

John Knickerbacker, Junr., in the Revolution was a private in the 14th Albany Co. Regiment of which his father was Colonel. (Robert's N. Y. in the Revolution, p. 235.) In 1791 he was second Major in Col. John W. Groesbeck's Regiment. (Mil. Min. of Council of Appointment, p. 197.)

He was a member of the N. Y. Legislature in 1796 and 1802.

After his father's death in 1802 he became the most wealthy of all the Knickerbackers and his long life of seventy-five years was spent in peace and prosperity. His wife, Elizabeth Winne, died Nov. 10, 1826, and exactly to the day and hour a year later, died John Knickerbocker Junior. A picture of him and his wife painted on wood is still in the possession of the family and represents him, as a man of fine presence. In the corner of this picture is, the following inscription :—'Hon. John Knickerbacker and his wife, Elizabeth Winne; Sittings taken the 20th day of April 1805 in their 54th year of their age. By Corset Schipper.' At the marriage of their youngest son Abraham in 1823, there was a family gathering in the homestead consisting of their four sons and their wives, their seven daughters and their husbands and so many grandchildren, that the family historian rashly asserts, that at this time there were one hundred of the descendants of John and Elizabeth Knickerbacker gathered around them. Under the heading "Three Knickerbacker Bibles" will be found the names and dates of birth of the children of this worthy pair written in their father's hand in his Dutch Bible.

Page 56

Will of John Knickerbacker

In the name of God. Amen. I, John Knickerbacker of Schagtekook in the county of Renselaer, farmer, being of good health and of sound mind and memory, Blessed be God; Therefore make and ordain this my last Will and Testament in manner following;—First I give my soul into the hands of Almighty God from whom it came hoping through the merits of Jesus Christ to receive forgiveness for all my sins and as to the worldly estate wherewith it hath pleased God to bless me will I give, devise and bequeath in the following order ;—first; it is my will and I do hereby order that all my past debts and funeral charges shall be paid as soon as decent and as conveniently can be done after my demise. Second; All my estate in the county of Renselaer except my mills and mill loft I give, devise and bequeath unto my four sons namely ;—William, Harmen, John and Abraham and unto their heirs and assigns forever Divided in the following order ;—that is to say what is called De Wandelaer's farm to consist of all the land conveyed unto me by Peter De Wandelaer Deceased except what is called the Newland together with lot number fifty four lying on the hill west of my old farm and must extend west until it takes in one hundred and eight acres, so that the whole of this farm contains three hundred and eighteen acres; the farm I now live on the west side of Tamherúck's Creek together with lot number fifty five and also what is called Hanksbergh so as the whole contains three hundred and eighteen acres; also to be one farm what is called De Ronda's farm together with lots number fifty two and fifty three which must extend also west until they take in one hundred and eighteen acres, so as the whole farm contains three hundred and eighteen acres; what is called the River farm joins on the North River and is computed about four hundred acres and the rents due the Corporation of Albany shall be Proportioned among the three old farms; the farm I now live on shall

be considered three hundred pounds better on account of the buildings thereon which must be paid to the other three farms. The lands aforesaid are described on a map made by Evert Van Allen now in my possession. The aforesaid division is my will and shall stand good that my four Sons aforesaid. shall each take a farm as aforesaid and my oldest son William to have the first choice and my silver tankard.

Third; the remainder of all my estate both real and personal wherever it is or can be found I give, devise and bequeath unto, my seven daughters namely,—Rebecka, Maria, Dircke, Anetie, Elizabeth, Nelly and Katline and unto their heirs and assigns forever and my will is that those of my children that are minors or unmarried and not educated shall receive the same privileges and out-sets as those have received that have married so that to Abraham be made up what each of the other sons have had and to my daughters Elizabeth, Nelly and Tyne be made good what my other daughters have had, so that they are as nearly equalized as can be.

Fourth; it is my will and I do hereby ordain that my beloved wife, Elizabeth shall, be and remain full mistress of all my estates both real and personal during (the time she remains) my widow and (she) together with my Beloved sons to be executors of this my will and testament and if she should happen to marry after my decease then (for) her to render all my estate as is ordained by this last will and I hereby revoke, disannul and destroy all other wills and testaments by me heretofore made and allow this to be my last will and testament this 26th day of September 1807.

(signed) John Knickerbacker

In the Presence of .
James Pattison
James Pattison Jr. .
Tho. Pattison.

An account of the four Sons of John Knickerbacker, Jr., will round out this sketch of the Knickerbackers at Schaghticoke-

coke; to which will be added the names of their seven daughters and those of the men they married.

First—William Winne Knickerbacker, married (1) Diricke Van Veghten, daughter of Derick Van Veghten of Schaghticoke May 19, 1792; she died November 15, 1807. (2) Eve Viele, daughter of Abraham Viele and Annetje Knickerbacker; she died March 29, 1865. William died July 11, 1846. He and both his wives are buried in the Knickerbacker graveyard at Schaghticoke. He had ten children; their names were (as recorded by J. F. Knickerbacker before 1882):

1. Derick, b. November 9, 1793; in. Anna, daughter of Gen. Simon De Ridder, February 13, 1815 (one son).

2. Elizabeth Winne, b. February 10, 1797; m. Jacob Groesbeck.
3. Rebecca, b. June 18, 1801; m. John Wesley Groesbeck, May 13, 1824.
4. Alida, b. May 25, 1804.
5. Maria, b. Oct. 21, 1807; m. Gerret Vandenberg, February 14, 1827.
6. John, b. March 8, 1809; m. Susan, daughter of Gen. Simon De Ridder, January 8, 1834 (Saratoga church record, says: "at her mothers,") John died July 14, 1840. (Two sons; Simon Knickerbacker, m. Frances A. Somers at Schuylerville, January 12, 1857.)
7. Abraham Viele, b. March 30, 1811; m.----- (one son).
8. Herman, b. November 20, 1813; m. (1) Sarah, daughter of John William Groesbeck; (2) Clarissa, daughter of Seth Seeley (two sons and one daughter).
9. William, b. Dec. 18, 1815; m. Adeline, daughter of John William Groesbeck, January 15, 1839; she died November 24, 1874. William died in 1900 (one son).
10. Anna, b. June 17, 1818; m. Sherman.

William Winne Knickerbacker's military record is as follows :—1793, Lieutenant; 1797, Captain; 1803, Second Major; 1808, Major; 1814-1817, Lieutenant Colonel of 45th Regiment Rensselaer Co. Militia. (Mil. Min. Council of Appointment, pp. 262, 381, 647, 991, 1518-67, 1800.) He is said to have been at the invasion of Plattsburg in 1814.

Page 59

Second—Herman, who married three times: (1) Ariantie, daughter of Abraham A. Lansing and Elsie Van Rensselaer, October 10, 1801. (2) Rachel, daughter of John Hermen Wendell and Cathalina Van Benthuyzen, December 6, 1814; she died July 31, 1823. (3) Mary, daughter of David Bue! and Rachel McNiel, July 20, 1826. He had fourteen children; their names were (as recorded by J. F. Knickerbacker):

1. Abraham Lansing, b. September 23, 1802; m. Maria Bryan (two sons and two daughters).
2. Elizabeth Winne, b. May 10, 1805; m. Myron Ticknor.
3. Elsie Gansevoort, b. October 7, 1806; m. Edwin Smith.
4. Catharine Van Rensselaer, b. May 2, 1808; m. Morris S. Van Buskirk, Sept. 22, 1831 (descendants).
5. Rebecca Bradshaw, b. September 1, 1813; in. John Brown Hoyt, October 10, 1832.
6. Arietta Lansing, b. Nov. 3, 1815; m. John B. Kellogg; d. November 30, 1884; buried at Schaghticoke.
7. Catalina Wendell, b. April 11, 1817; m. John W. Griffeth; d. August 28, 1855 (descendants).
8. Maria Van Veghten, b. September 9, 1819; m. William P. Griswald.
9. John Wendell, b. March 18, 1821; d. March 18, 1825.
10. Rachel Wendell, b. November 9, 1822; never married; d. 1900; buried at Schaghticoke.
11. Sarah Bird, b. April 18, 1827; in. Rev. Samuel M. Haskins, May 29, 1850; d. Sept. 24, 1856.
12. Herman, b. May 6, 1830; m. Jane M., daughter of Oliver Hutchinson, September 24, 1856 (several children).
13. Charlotte Buel, b. February 1, 1832; m. William Chamberlain, October 2, 1856.
14. David Buel, b. February 24, 1833; m. Sarah Moore, July 22, 1856 (no children). He was admitted to Holy Orders in June, 1856, and died Episcopal Bishop of Indiana at Indianapolis, December 31, 1894.

This Herman Knickerbacker was he who called himself facetiously, "Prince of the Tribe of Knickerbacker," and whom Washington Irving fancifully referred to as "my cousin, the Congressman."

Of him the Albany Annals of 1855 has this to say under date of January 30th:

“Herman Knickerbacker died at Schaghticoke aged 75. He read law in Albany with John V. Henry, and is remembered rather as a companionable man than as a scholar or a statesman. Judge Knickerbacker’s ancestors emigrated from the Province of Brabant during the political changes consequent upon the death of William the Second, Prince of Orange, in the middle of the seventeenth century. Hernmen was born July 27th, 1779, being the second son of John Knickerbacker of Schaghticoke and grandson of Col. John Knickerbacker of the French and Revolutionary wars. Having been educated for the bar as a pupil of John V. Henry and afterwards of John Bird he commenced the practice of his profession at an early age, taking immediately a prominent place in it, as well as in political life, for which he was well suited. Being a decided Federalist and possessed of wealth and great personal influence, he was soon chosen to fill important offices, and when less than thirty years of age was elected to the United States Congress under the administration of President Madison. He was afterwards a member of the New York Legislature, then Judge of the County of Rensselaer, until the infirmities of age forced him to retire from public life. In the office of Supervisor, which he held for many years, his influence was often useful to the City of Troy, particularly in having it established as the shire town, which except for his exertions would have been given to the village of Lansingburgh.

“In social life Judge Knickerbacker always filled a brilliant place. Bred from his childhood to associate with some of the most distinguished men in an age remarkable for its high-toned courtesy and having the control of a large family of slaves, his manners acquired that blending of suavity with dignity peculiar to those accustomed to early intercourse with the world and the early habit of command. This, with his generous hospitality and jovial humor, won for him the popular sobriquet of “Prince of Schaghticoke” and surrounded him with numerous friends whom, says the historian, he “received with open arms and surrounded them with wonderful loving kindness.” These to their credit did not desert him in his age and misfortune but ever with

a kindness he well deserved, gathered about him to console his grief and conceal his faults. With him has passed away nearly the last representative of his class—the old Dutch gentlemen whose memory, long after their places shall have been filled arid their language forgotten, will live green among the lovers of hospitality and humor. A characteristic anecdote is told of him while he was a member of Congress; being asked the difference between the Dutch Reformed tenets and those of the Presbyterians and not willing to acknowledge his ignorance of the subject he replied naively that he believed one sung short metre and the other long.” (Munsell’s Annals of Albany, Vol. VII, pp. 316, 317, 318.)

To this sympathetic summing up of “Prince” Knickerbacker’s character and career should be added the oft-repeated story of the practical joke played by him upon the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Troy as it is told by his nephew, General Egbert L. Viele ;—“Having erected a spacious residence for himself some distance from the homestead he decided to become the entertainer of the Mayor and Common Council of Troy as an offset to the festivities (entertainment of the Mayor and Council of Albany) at the paternal home. On the arrival of these gentlemen with their appetites sharpened by a long drive, he pretended to have forgotten the day and to be perfectly unprepared to receive them,—allowing his guests while suffering the keen pangs of hunger to overhear him in an apparent discussion

with his butler, as to how to make one pair of chickens suffice for so many mouths. The consternation—not to say rage of the guests may be imagined. A sudden relief came when the dining room doors opened upon a most sumptuous repast and a hearty enjoyment of the practical joke was in order.”

In 1801 (January 26) a new Troop of Cavalry was raised in Rensselaer Co. in the Second Squadron of the Third Regiment of Cavalry. Of this Squadron Herman Knickerbacker was made Captain. In 1810 he was promoted to the rank of Major of the Squadron which was in Col. Samuel McChesney’s Regiment. In 1818 he was commissioned Colonel of the Third Regiment of Rensselaer Co. Cavalry. (Mil. Min. of Council of Appointment of N. Y. State, pp. 553, 730, 1167, 1943.)

Page 62

Third—John, who also married three times. (1) Rachel, daughter of Nanning Hermense Vischer; (2) Sarah, daughter of Charles Coit; (3) Caroline, daughter of Thomas Chester. (Six children; given according to the J. F. Knickerbacker record.)

1. Nanning Vischer, b. ; m. (two daughters).
2. Rebecca Fonda, b. , m. Solon Grout.
3. Margaret Bull, b. ; m. Henry T. Walbridge.
4. John, b. ----, d. unmarried April 24, 1856.
5. Jane, b. ----; m. William Cunningham.
6. Thomas Adams, b. ----; m. Helen L. Jones, June 25, 1862. (Six children; two living.) Lives at Troy, N. Y.

John Knickerbacker lived at Waterford, N. Y., and was President of the local bank.

Fourth— Abraham, married twice; (1) Laura, daughter of Joseph Sturges and Margaret Foster, January 2, 1823; (2) Mary Anne, daughter of Dr. Moses Hale and Mary Nazro, June 27, 1828. He died March 11, 1869. (Five children; record as given by J. F. Knickerbacker.)

1. Joseph Foster, b. February 18, 1824; never married; d. November 16, 1882. (Tombstone at Schaghticoke.)
2. John Hale, b. March 16, 1829; never married; d. June 17, 1858.
3. Mary Elizabeth, b. February 26, 1830, d. July 30 1846 (9?), just after graduating from the Emma Willard School at Troy. On her gravestone is written: “How many hopes lie buried here.”
4. Richard, b. March 15, 1831; d. October 6, 1833.
5. Henry, b. January 25, 1833, m. Helen Mar, daughter of Isaiah Blood and Jane Gates, September 16, 1857. He is dead and so are his two sons, leaving no descendants. He was head of the Banking House of H. Knickerbacker & Co., 25 Broad St, N. Y. City. At the present time (1916) in the N. Y. Telephone book “H. Knickerbacker & Co.” leads a long line of “Knickerbocker” Corporations.

Abraham Knickerbacker served in the Rensselaer Co. Militia in 1815 as Adjutant in his brother William’s regiment; in 1817 as

Lieutenant and in 1818 as Captain. (Mil. Min. Council of Appointment, pp. 1567, 1801, 1892.)

Joseph Foster Knickerbacker, only child of his first wife, says of Abraham Knickerbacker: "He occupied the family mansion in Old Schaghticoke. He was noted for his hospitality and uprightness of character." Of his brother John Hale, Joseph says: "He was an accomplished scholar and antiquary."

From his father's death in 1869 to his own death by accident in N. Y. City in 1882, Joseph, a kindly, dreamy man, afflicted from birth with a deformity of the arms which however never interfered with his penmanship, kept bachelor hall in the homestead. He expressed his gentle musings in a volume printed in 1876 entitled: "Vision of the Arch of Truth and other Poems."

The seven daughters of Johannes Knickerbacker, Jr., married as follows:

1. Rebecca Fonda, m. John Bradshaw (son of John Bradshaw and Mary Wool who came from Antrim Co. Ireland in 1740 and settled at the Half Moon) August 5, 1792. She d. February 22, 1834.
2. Maria De Wandelaer, m. John Van Veghten, May 21, 1794
3. Derica Van Antwerp, m. Evert Van Allen, August 3, 1801; d. December 21, 1833.
4. Anna Viele, m. John L. Deforest, February 27, 1805; d. April 25, 1854.
5. Elizabeth Winne, m. John William Groesbeck, August 20, 1808. She died April 30, 1849.
6. Helena, m. Jacob Ten Eycke Pruyn, July 20, 1816.
7. Katlyne, m. John Lodevicus Viele, November 18, 1810. She d. September 16th, 1837. John Lodevicus Viele, son of Lodevicus Viele and Eva Toll, d. October 19, 1832.

In a little book to which I have before referred, called "Bradshaw Memorial," a characteristic anecdote of John Knickerbacker, Jr., is thus related:

"Across the Hudson east from Half Moon and Stiiwater lies the Dutch town of Schaghticoke. The settlers on the west side were largely of English or Yankee blood and no love was

lost between them and their Dutch neighbors. So it was with little pleasure that John Knickerbacker saw the young Irishman, John Bradshaw from Half Moon come to woo Rebecca, the eldest of his seven daughters. When he finally gave a reluctant consent he took care to brand all the furniture of the bride's ample "setting out" with his own initials, "J. K.," in case of any future rascality on the part of his new son-in-law !. But he learnt in after years to like and trust him as well as any of the seven. Rebecca possessed in a marked degree the typical Dutch traits of thrift, neatness and a sharp tongue which could scold in two languages. A part of her dower was two slaves, a boy and a girl. The boy was a ne'er do well and absconded after a time; the girl was the faithful nurse of the children as long as she lived and I have, heard my father say that they loved their black 'Mammy' as well as their white one." ("Aunt Betsey"—Mrs. Elizabeth Fairbanks—probably great granddaughter of John Knickerbacker.)

The record is ended. There are no longer Knickerbackers at Schaghticoke. Their work is done. Each Knickerbacker in his generation had aided in the upbuilding of New York State. First they were progressive pioneers, afterwards constant defenders of her soil from invidious foes. They all maintained happy and law-abiding homes and raised large families of stalwart sons and daughters. Each in turn

promoted the principles of religion, first by lending active aid to the establishing of a place of worship — according to the tenets of the Reformed Dutch church of Holland—in their locality and then by ever after supporting that church in the offices of Elders and Deacons.

Different members served in the State Legislature, one was in Congress and had a seat on the Bench. This family returned to New York State three-fold in the conservative influence of well-spent lives, the welcome accorded to their emigrant ancestor in the seventeenth century.

The Knickerbacker Mansion at Old Schaghticoke and Other Schaghticoke Knickerbacker Homes

There were at least three different Knickerbocker homes at Schaghticoke: That of Col. William Winne Knickerbacker on

Page 65

what is now known as the Barnett place; that of “Prince” Knickerbacker on Schaghticoke Hill, and the original family mansion at Old Schaghticoke. This last is over one hundred years old and replaces one which was burnt down.

In a letter dated Cold Spring Harbor, L. I., March 22, 1916, Prof. Howard J. Banker gives a few words of personal reminiscence — “Besides the old Knickerbacker place, William Knickerbacker lived in a house some half mile or so to the east. I could go to the place but at this distance could hardly describe its location very closely. I remember him well. “Judge Knickerbacker lived at Schaghticoke Hill by the creek. The original house was burnt down, the present one is since his time. . . . Directly across the road is where John Evans now lives; he and his father before him have owned the Knickerbacker Mills for the last fifty years or more. . . . My father and Bishop Knickerbacker, son of the Judge, were schoolmates. I remember meeting the Bishop once when I was a boy.”

Several accounts of the old homestead have been printed—all more or less flowery. One says it was erected on the site of the old fort, another recounts that it was built of bricks made in Holland, etc. I have not been able to verify these assertions.

The house as it is now has lost much of its picturesqueness; an excellent but modern slate roof has replaced the original one of quaint curves which was as one has said “pyramidally shaped like that of the venerable Dutch church that formerly stood in the middle of State Street in the City of Albany.” It however still stands impressively among its old trees, surrounded by its broad acres with its background still filled in by the “Tree of Welfare.” Were it differently situated it would be well worth being bought by the State or some patriotic society and preserved as a museum of Dutch and Indian relics, but to the casual visitor it seems in its absolute isolation to be as the caretaker’s daughter observed “at the end of everything.”

This account by General Egbert L. Viele taken from Harper’s Magazine for December, 1876, relates how the homestead was in his time:

“Here (at Schaghticoke) the waters of the Hoosic and the Tanhennick meet in a circular valley surrounded on nearly all

sides by high hills. The soil is exceedingly fertile and the landscape exceedingly beautiful. In the midst of this valley stands the mansion of the Knickerbackers. The principal entrance is reached through an avenue of ancient trees, time-worn and scarred, that climb high above the roof, like watch towers overlooking the plain. The vine-covered porch with its hospitable seat on either side, welcomes the visitor and the huge brass knocker on the upper leaf of the old-fashioned oaken door summons the cheerful host.

“The main hall is in itself a room. Quaint settees and an antique bookcase with rare old engravings on the wall, constitute the furnishings, while over all an air of quiet comfort and repose pervades. The principal staircase is in the second hall, separated from the first by folding doors. On either side of the main hall are the reception and drawing rooms while the dining room and library open into the rear hall. In the olden time the dining room contained the history-telling fire place with its tiled front and sides representing scenes and events in Bible history. . . . These crude delineations were well calculated to impress the great truths of the Bible upon those who gathered in the winter evenings around the glowing embers. . . . Beyond the dining room in the large wing are the kitchen and servants departments.

“The great cellar which extends under the entire building, was the slaves quarters in winter. In summer they lived in cabins for the most part, but for greater comfort during the extreme cold weather and also as a haven of security against attack by the French and their Indian allies they resorted to this cellar whose huge open fire place still remains.

“If the bricks could speak how many marvelous conceptions from the half-developed Ethiopian brain could they relate. Wonderful feats of purely imaginary valor, unearthly tales of ghosts and goblins, all intermingled with that vein of quaint humor which the African with his rare powers of imitation, so readily imbibed from his Dutch master. All the slaves in the State of New York were emancipated in 1727 but many of them remained at the old homestead until death removed them from it, their attachment to home and the members of the family remaining undiminished to the last moment.”

The subjoined poem was written for the Knickerbocker Magazine after a visit to Schaghticoke:

Schaghticoke and the Knickerbockers

By Mrs. L H. Sigourney

Oh vale of peace ! oh haunt serene!
Oh hill encircled shades !
No footsteps rude, or fiery neigh
Of iron steed o'er graded way
Your sylvan steep invades.

The red-browed Indian's planted name
Your blended waters bore,*
Though they who erst that baptism gave
Beneath oblivion's blackening wave
Have sunk to rise no more.

Here clad in ancient honor dwelt
The Knickerbocker race.
And wisely ruled in hall and bower,
And held their old manorial power
With firm and honest grace.

Then gatherings grand of social joy
The ancestral mansion knew;
While roof and rafter shook with mirth
And hospitality bad birth,
Which still is warm and true.

So may the Knickerbocker line
Their prosperous harvest sow,
Nor ever lack a noble heir
Their dynasty and name to bear
While mingling waters flow !

*Schaghticoke is the Indian name for "mingling waters."