

**HISTORY OF THE
VERMILYA, VERMILYE, VERMILYEA, VERMILYER
FAMILY
by Carl P. Vermilyea**

This genealogy begins with Johannes Vermelje. Johannes, the first to marry and raise his family in America, is the patriarch of all those who spell their surname as shown above. But, who were his ancestors and where did they originate?

Johannes was the son of Isaac Vermeille and grandson of Jean de Vermeille. Records of the Walloon Church, a Protestant congregation, in London, England, show that Jean and his wife, Marie Roubley, registered their children for baptism there circa 1600. Earlier ancestors have not been identified; but, with the surname "de Vermeille" ("from Vermeille") it has been deduced that Jean was from the town of Vermeille (now known as Vermelles¹) in France. Under patronymics, many adopted the name of their village as their surname.

Despite being members of the Walloon Church in London, there is doubt as to whether the family's roots were Walloon or Huguenot. The Walloons were primarily in Belgium; the Huguenots in France. The town of Vermeille was at the border of the two sects. Two noted authors of genealogy publications covering the family took different sides on the debate. John Hogan Benton,² a supporter of the Huguenot theory wrote: "We are grounded in the belief that the ancestry of Isaac Vermeille were French Huguenots, who being alarmed by the horrors of the St. Bartholomew massacre of 1572, found, in common with many of their countrymen, an asylum from religious persecution in Protestant, England. The incident of baptism in a Walloon church may properly be referred to a coincidence of religious faith and affinity of language." James Riker,³ who believed the Walloon theory, wrote: "We nowhere find it stated that our Vermilye's were Walloons, but think it a safe assumption for several reasons. The congregation at London of which they were members was then composed exclusively of that people. Then their Christian names favor it. (The emigres were Jean and his wife, Marie. Children born in England were named Isaac, Rachel, Rebecca and Jean.) And one of the Walloon towns bears the name Vermeille, being in Artois, southeast of Bethune, near a lake at the source of the Papegay, which latter runs northward, entering the Lys near Armentieres." Based on geography and the fact that only about ten percent of Walloons were Protestants, it appears that a Huguenot ancestry is more likely. In any case, it can be properly claimed that the family's roots are in France.

The year Jean migrated from France to England is unknown. The reason for the move was, most probably, religious persecution. During the lengthy war between the Protestants and Catholics in France during the later part of the 16th Century, the English became allies of the Protestants, consequently, many Huguenots and Protestant Walloons sought sanctuary in England.

There exists another theory about the family's ancestry. James Riker reported that some members of the family believed the family's roots could be traced to Italy through the distinguished reformer-cleric, Pietro Martire Vermigli (Peter Martyr).

¹Source; Dyckman W. Vermilye, Corrales, New Mexico. In the early 1990's, Dyckman traveled to London, England, where he did research. He then traveled to Vermelles, France, where he confirmed that the town was one named Vermeille. And, it was through Dyckman's efforts that information, mentioned below, was obtained from the records of the Munster Church, Zurich, Switzerland.

²*David Benton Jr. and Sarah Bingham, Their Ancestors and Descendants; and Other Ancestral Lines* by John Hogan Benton, Esq. Of Washington, D.C.; Boston, Press of David Clapp & Son, 1906.

³*Revised History of Harlem (City of New York) - Its Origin and Early Annals* by James Riker, New Harlem Publishing company, 1904.

This hypothesis has been propagated down through the generations, but, is a myth. Pietro had no male heirs. His only child to live past their first infancy was a daughter, Maria, who was born in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1563 and went on to marry Paul Zanin, a Swiss citizen.⁴ In explaining the myth, Benton wrote: “The nativity of the Vermilyas is matter of conjecture with some that bear the name, and possibly of a pardonable bias that covets relationship with someone of the name who has attained an eminence in the affairs of men ...”

Isaac Vermeille, Jean de Vermeille’s son, was born in London and baptized in the Walloon Church in 1601. As a young adult, he moved from London to Leiden, Holland, where he married Jacomina Jacobs (also referred to as Jacomina Jacobse or Jacomyntje Jacobs Swart in various publications). There, they had four children: Maria, born in 1629; Johannes, born in 1632; Abraham, born circa 1634; and, Rachel, born in 1637. Nothing is known of Isaac’s occupation or livelihood while in Holland; however, one source speculates he may have been a soldier in Germany during the Thirty Year’s War.

In 1662, the entire family immigrated to America on the ship “De Purmerland Kerch.” The original receipt for the passage money is in the New York City Library. None of the four children were married at the time. They settled in the newly (1658) established town of New Harlem on the northern end of Manhattan Island. Their first home was located in the area of what would now be nearly central of the block bordered by 1st and 2^d Avenues and 122^d and 123^d Streets, New York City. Historical publications contain information about Johannes and his two sisters, including their marriages and families; but, little is mentioned about Isaac’s second son, Abraham. Some accounts say Abraham never married while others indicate he may have died or returned to Holland. In any case, Johannes was the only one to perpetuate the family name.

In New Harlem, Isaac was welcomed by some of his former acquaintances from Holland. In 1663, he was appointed to command a local militia company; perhaps in recognition of being a veteran of the Thirty Years War, as indicated above. In 1666, he was elected as one of four town overseers and later served two terms as town magistrate. For his livelihood, he farmed, had an orchard and operated a brewery with his son, Johannes. Isaac died in 1676.

This summary is not complete without addressing the question: how did the surname get from de Vermeille to the present-day spellings? Isaac dropped the *de* his father used but continued to use Vermeille throughout his life. His son, Johannes, was born and, it is believed, immigrated to America using the same spelling as his father. After immigrating, Johannes is known to have written his surname Vermelje:⁵ changing the spelling, but not the pronunciation, so that it would conform to the Dutch dialect in New Harlem. Johannes had two sons, Isaac and John, who became heads of families. Again, for pronunciation reasons, these two further changed the spelling to the variations seen today. Benton wrote: “...the branch to which their descendants belong may generally be determined by the terminal letter of the name: those of Isaac’s line ending with *e* or *ea* and John’s with *a*”. Benton was correct; however, between the years 1890 and 1905 some families which used the terminal letter *a* changed the ending to *ea*; perhaps an attempt to unify the *e* and *a* branches of the family. The *er* ending is a more recent spelling modification.

⁴*The Dictionary of National Biography, Volume XXX*, founded in 1882 by George Smith, published since 1917 by the Oxford University Press, London; and, the *Book of Baptism*, Munster Church, Zurich, Switzerland.

⁵*John Dyckman of Harlem and His Descendants* by H. Dorothy Romer and Helen B. Hartman, 1981.

SIBLINGS OF JOHANNES VERMELJE

By Carl P. Vermilyea

In the 1998 edition of this book, we briefly mentioned Johannes Vermelje's siblings: Maria, Abraham and Rachel. Since then, the Vermilyea Family Association has received several inquiries from descendants of Johannes' sisters; therefore, we include here information¹ about each of his siblings.

Maria Vermeille (surname also spelled Vermelje, Vermilye, Vernelia, Vernelje, Verniele and VerVelje in various publications):

Maria was born in Leiden, Holland, and baptized there on 2 August 1629. She married, first, on 10 June 1663 in New Harlem (Harlem, New York City), Johannes (Jan or John) de la Montagne (LaMontagne or Montagne) Jr., the son of Doctor Johannes de la Montagne, the pioneer of New Harlem. Maria and Jan had five children. Jan also had a son from a previous marriage, Nicasius who married Christina Roosevelt. Maria and Jan were members of the Harlem Dutch Church (also known as the Harlem Collegiate Dutch Reformed Church or the Reformed Low Dutch Church of Harlem) that was established in 1660 and met in private residences in the community until 1667 when construction of the first church, a rough timbered structure, was completed. From 1600 to 1662, Jan served as the Church's first deacon and from 1664 to 1670 its "voorleser" (forereader – one who conducted services in the absence of a minister).² He concurrently owned a farm, served as the community's schoolteacher and held community government positions. Jan died in 1672. After his death, Maria sold the farm and purchased a home in the village of New Harlem from her brother, Johannes Vermelje.

Maria with her surname spelled VerVelje, married, second, in 1675 in New Orange (like New Harlem, a settlement within New Netherlands), Isaac Hendrickson (Hendricksen or Hendrickesen) Kip (or Kipp)³ who was born in Amsterdam, Holland, in 1627. Isaac was the son of Hendrickson (or Hendrickesen) Kip (Kipp or Kype), a tailor born in Holland, and Tryntje Lubberts. Isaac was much respected in New Harlem and was nominated for magistrate 27 October 1675. He and Maria had no children; however, Isaac did have six children by his former wife, Catalina Jansen. Maria and Isaac were married about three years when he died in July 1678.

New York City records verify that Maria, under surnames spelled Vernelia, Vernelje and Vermilje, was residing in the City from 1664 through 1674.⁴ She died in November 1689 in New Harlem and was buried there on 23 November 1689.

Children (all were members of the Harlem Dutch Church in the late 1600s):

I. Abraham (Abram). In 1689, Abram, a weaver, married Rebecca Ides the daughter of Theunis Ides. In 1686, he was a benefactor for the building of the community's second church, a stone structure to replace the original church.⁵ Abraham inherited his mother's property in 1689.

¹ Basic information concerning these siblings is from Source Codes #10, #40 and #145.

² Source Code #175.

³ Source Code #248 (*New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*; 1875 edition, page 191). Their Marriage Certificate is listed as #2220321845.

⁴ Source Code #247 (*New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*; 1876 edition, page 23; 1877 edition, page 29; 1878 edition, page 78; 1879 edition, page 130; and, 1899 edition, page 18).

⁵ Source Code #175.

- II. Jan.
- III. Isaac.
- IV. Willem.
- V. (Name not yet found.)

Abraham Vermeille (surname also appears as Verniele and Vermelje):

Very little information about Abraham exists. He was born in 1633 or 1634 in Leiden, Holland. In 1663, he was a private in the same local (Harlem) militia company as his father. In 1677, he was baptized in New York City with his surname spelled Vermelje.⁶ Some accounts state that Abraham never married while others indicate he may have moved from Harlem. In any case, there is no evidence that he married and/or had issue.

Rachel Vermeille (surname also spelled Vermilia, Vermelie, Vermelje, VerMelje, VerMilje, Vermilye, Vernelje, Verniele, Vernilye and Vernielje):⁷

Rachel was baptized in 1637 (one source shows 1640), in Leiden, Holland. She married, first, Jan (Johannes or John) Ter Bosch (Von der Bosch, Ter Bos, Ter Boss, Ter Bush) who was born in 1626 in Dorsten, Westphalen, Holland, and immigrated to New Harlem from Tellust, Holland. There are two records of Rachel's marriage. One shows the marriage took place on 4 May 1663 at the New York City (New Amsterdam) Dutch Church; the second shows 10 June 1663 at the Brooklyn Dutch Church with a certificate from Manhattan, New York. This may be a recording error as her sister Maria's first marriage is also shown as having been on 10 June 1663. Adding to this possible mix-up, the Dutch Church in New Harlem had no minister in 1663; therefore, it is believed that the marriage was conducted by a visiting preacher from Brooklyn who recorded the marriage with the seat of the Church in New Amsterdam, now Manhattan, New York City. Also, both couples were members of the Harlem Dutch Reformed Church at the time of their marriages. Rachel, with her surname spelled Vermelje, Vernelje and Vernielje, was shown as living in New York City from 1668 through 1677.⁸ She and Jan had eight children. Jan died in 1678.

Rachel, with her surname spelled VerMilye, married, second, on 25 May 1679, Dirck (Derick or Dirk) Wessels (or Wesselszen) in New York City⁹. He was the son of widow Metje Wessels. Rachel and Dirck moved to Kingston, New York. The number of children Rachel may have had with Dirck, if any, is unknown.

⁶ Source Code #247 (*New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 1877 edition, page 169). We have found no other Abraham Vermelje in New York in 1677 and therefore conclude that, despite his age, the Abraham that was baptized must have been Johannes' brother.

⁷ Other sources for information about this family: (1) *Fitchett – The New York Ancestry of Johannah Fitchett*; and (2), *Briggs-DeGroof 1940-1620 – Genealogy Tree, The Colonial Ancestry of the Family of John Green Briggs, Son of Job Briggs and Patience Green, and Isabell Gibbs DeGraff, Daughter of William Stoutenburgh DeGraff and Susan Hopkins*; by Harry Tallmadge Briggs, Poughkeepsie, New York, and John Greene Briggs, West Babylon, Long Island, New York, 1940.

⁸ Source Code #247 (*New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*; 1877 edition, pages 25, 80, 87, 131 and 169; 1878 edition, page 143; and, 1879 edition, page 126).

⁹Source Code #248 (*New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 1876 edition, page 31). Their Marriage Certificate is listed as #2220322159.

Children:¹⁰

- I. Johannes, baptized on 25 May 1664 and died young, probably in 1664.
- II. Johannes, baptized on 18 October 1665. In 1688, he married Elizabeth Hendricks. Settling in Fishkill, he was one of the first two residents of Rombart Precinct, Dutchess County, New York. He died circa 1724.
- III. Catharina (Catrina or Catherine), born in 1668 in New Harlem and baptized on 5 February 1668. On 24 March 1688 at the Kingston Dutch Church, she married Walron (Walran or Walrand) Dumont (or Marten du Mont) Jr., who was born in 1667 and baptized at the Kingston Dutch Church on 13 March 1667.
- IV. Isaac, baptized 13 October 1669.
- V. Maria, baptized on 16 March 1672. She married Jan Willemaz (or Willems) Schut.
- VI. Sara, baptized 11 February 1674.
- VII. Johanna, baptized 10 March 1675.
- VIII. Jacobus, baptized 22 November 1677.

¹⁰ Dates of baptism from the *List of Baptisms, Dutch Reform Church, New Amsterdam*; as provided by Tom Terbush of Virginia on 22 July 2000. Tom descends from Rachel's second child, Johannes. Tom, from his own records, validated and contributed to this information about Rachel and her family.

