

THE DE WITT FAMILY, OF ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK.

1. THE first mention in this country, of TJerck Claessen De Witt, the ancestor of the De Witt family,* is found in the "*Trouw Boeck*" or Register of Marriages of the Reformed (Collegiate) Dutch Church, of New York City, where it is recorded that on the 24th day of April, 1656, "Tjerck Claessen De Witt van Grootholdt en Zunderlandt," married "Barbara Andriessen van Amsterdam." Zunderlandt has not been definitely located, but it is probably Saterland, a district of Westphalia, on the southern border of East Friesland.

Whether or not any of his family emigrated to America with him has not been ascertained, but it is probable that they did, for in 1662 his sister Emmerentie De Witt married Martinus Hoffman, at New Amsterdam, and in 1699 his brother Jan Claessen De Witt died unmarried at Kingston.

For a short time after his marriage he lived in New York (his first child, Andries, was born there), but in the spring of 1657 he removed to Albany, where he had purchased a house and lot.

In September, 1660, he exchanged his Albany property with Madame de Hutter, for land in Wiltwyck (now Kingston), "possession to be given May 1, 1661." He probably took possession at that time, as in September, 1661, he appears as plaintiff in an action at law before the Schepens Court of Wiltwyck, and on October 11th the same court ordered the Sheriff (Roeloff Swartwout) to pay him three and a half schepels of wheat in eight days and seven more in one month.

From this time until his death, he resided in Kingston and Hurley, and some of the land which he purchased is still in the hands of his descendants.

That he was a man of considerable means is shown by the fact that in 1661 he was taxed 125 guilders (about \$50) to pay for building a church in Esopus.

In 1662 he owned No. 28 of the "new lots."

June 7, 1663, when Kingston and Hurley were almost entirely destroyed by the Indians, his eldest daughter, Taatje, was taken prisoner, but was soon rescued. She afterward married Captain Matthys Matthyssen.

"During the winter of 1664 there was much sickness in Esopus [Kingston]. Fever took hold of the people and prostrated half the place. But this did not prevent men from gathering their money. Roeloff Swartwout sold a horse to Tjerck Claessen De Witt, which was taken to the latter's barn, but the ex-sheriff, becoming dissatisfied, took it away secretly.

* Tjerck Claessen De Witt was the son, as the name would indicate, of Claes or Nicholas De Witt, and, judging from the custom prevalent at that time of naming children after grandparents, it is probable that his mother's first name was Taatje, for his eldest daughter bears that name, as does also a daughter of Emmerentie Hoffman, his sister, and furthermore he had a sister named Taatje, living in Holland.