

# THE FAMILY

OF

JORIS DIRCKSEN BRINCKERHOFF,

*By*  
Roeliff Brinkerhoff &  
J. Jan West Brinkerhoff.

1638.

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RICHARD BRINCKERHOFF,

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COL. DERICK BRINCKERHOFF.

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BY T. VAN WYCK BRINCKERHOFF.

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COL. DERICK BRINCKERHOFF was one of the first of the name who was born in Dutchess County.

He was the son of Abraham Brinckerhoff, and nephew of Col. John Brinckerhoff of the first generation in the county, and was more than any other man of the Flushing branch of the family a representative man, who had spent years in public positions. He was born shortly after 1720. His father had died comparatively young, leaving a large family to be cared for and looked after by his widowed mother.

Being the oldest son, he soon shared with his mother in the management of the family. He married August 27, 1747, Geertie Wyckoff, of Flatlands. The young men of that day were mostly obliged to go back to Long Island to get their wives. Such, at all events, was the case with the young colonel. He afterward inherited the farm where his father Abraham had lived before him.

Being naturally of an enterprising turn of mind, he built, first a store, and then a grist mill, and commenced doing a general business with the community at large. This was the first grist mill then built, with the exception of Madam Brett's, at the mouth of the stream. She had erected the first mill upon the Patent. The first settlers scarcely needed anything more than a mill and a blacksmith shop, as they manufactured their own wearing apparel, and received their groceries by sloops from New York.

The whole community, as it was then, became more or less his patrons, after his mill and store were fairly in operation.

Young men who fill such positions are widely known, and soon acquire much personal influence. Such was the case with the young colonel. He carried on a thrifty business, which added both to his means and influence.

There have been but very few men of the Flushing family

who have given their time to public life. The most of them have acquired farms, and plantations, etc., though prominent influential men in their communities, have, nevertheless, not been politicians, or office seekers.

In some families this passion seems to be inherent in the blood and must be gratified.

The Hackensack branch of the family, and especially those that have gone West, have more largely acquired it. The Colonel was a large, strong man, with dark hair and features, and florid complexion. As he grew older he was thought by some to be austere, reserved and forbidding.

He kept fine horses, and rode in a phaeton, a carriage with room for two persons, and a colored driver, a style not much in demand in that early period of the country. It was, nevertheless, the Colonel's everyday custom. It attracted just about the same attention then as a tally-ho does now.

The Colonel was, moreover, a very decided man; a firm believer in what he considered to be right, and a solid devout Reformed Dutch Churchman. The Sabbath, when Whitfield preached in the open air within half a stone's throw of his own door, and when the people were gathering together, as soon as the old Dutch church bell rang, his colored groom knew exactly, without being told, what that meant, and halted his prancing horses at the front of the porch until the Colonel and his wife were comfortably seated, and then drove him just exactly where he had driven him hundreds of times before. The Colonel never left his own church to hear sensational preachers. If the Dutch Reformed Church and its preachers were good enough for any occasion, they were good enough for all. Before the Revolution, and while the State of New York was a province of Great Britain, he had been a member of the Colonial Legislature for nine successive years, commencing with 1768 and continuing to 1777.

He was a member, also, of the first Provincial Congress, which assembled May 23, 1775, in New York City, and was presided over by Peter Livingston Esq., which adjourned November 4, 1775. He was much in public life at an eventful period in the history of the country. He was unchangingly and uncompromisingly devoted to the cause of the colonists. He was also a member of the first Assembly of the State of New York, which met at Kingston in 1777, and for nine years more was almost

a continuous member of that body, which held for many years afterwards its sessions in the City of Poughkeepsie. He was also Chairman of the Vigilance Committee of the town, and acted in that capacity as long as its organization was needed. His house was located during the Revolution about two miles distant from the hospitals and workshops and barracks of the Continental Army, located at the gateway of the mountains, directly south of the Fishkill Village, and was often visited by officers of the army. Lafayette was sick for six weeks at the colonel's house, and was attended constantly by Dr. McKnight, of the army. Washington often came to his house. A daughter of Colonel Brinckerhoff told me that when her first child was born, Lafayette was then sick at her father's house, and when he came to congratulate her he took her baby in his arms, and hugged it and kissed it and rejoiced over it as much as he could have done if it had been his own.

The Wappinger Indians, or detachments of their tribe, were in the country. Nimham, their last chief was still living. He was a friend of the Colonel's and came frequently to see him. They had been born almost in the same neighborhood, were nearly of the same age, and were both of them the chosen and national leaders of men. One of them influenced in directing sentiment in the councils of white men, the other in guarding what still remain of the once powerful Wappinger nation.

When the Revolution broke out, Nimham held his warriors true to the cause his white friend had espoused, and remained steadfast and unchanging through that great contest. I have heard the Colonel's daughter say that she had often seen the hillside around her father's house covered with Indians, who were sleeping there through the night, wrapped in their blankets.

He lost his life fighting for the American cause. There was a detachment of Taulton's Rangers located at King's Bridge, and Nimham went down with his warriors to capture them. Col. Emerick was out upon a scouting expedition the day previous, and discovered them, and was compelled to retreat. We quote from Simcoe's *Military Journal* :

The following morning the whole of the British force at King's Bridge was ordered out. An engagement was brought on by Emerick's Corps on Cortland Ridge. The Indians made

the attack from behind the fences, and in their first fire wounded five of our men. The engagement was renewed. Emerick charged the ridge with cavalry in overwhelming force. All hope of successful resistance gone, Nimham commanded his followers to fly, but for himself exclaimed: "I am an aged tree, and will die here!!"

Ridden down by Simcoe, he wounded that officer, and was on the point of dragging him from his horse, when he was shot by his orderly. The Indians fought most gallantly. The Indian doctor who was with Nimham was captured, and said that when Nimham saw the grenadiers close in his rear, he called out to his people to fly, that he *himself* was old, and would die there.

His son lost his life in the same engagement. The Indians afterward returned and placed a mound over his grave. Traces of this mound are said to be left to this day. It is called Nimham's mound. There lies buried the last chief of the Wappinger nation, whose tribe once owned almost the entire soil between New York and Albany. Whenever a monument is planted at Fishkill, in the gateway of the Highlands, to the memory of the unnumbered dead who gave their lives for the cause of American Independence, and who lie buried there, somewhere let the name of Nimham be carved upon the marble. Somewhere let it be said that the last chief of the once great Wappinger nation gave his life, and the life of his son, fighting for American Independence.

General Washington, after mentioning the service which had been rendered by them, says: "They are anxious to return home, and I have thought best to gratify them. Captain Solomon, with part of these people, were with us in the year 1778. The tribe suffered severely during that campaign in a skirmish with the enemy, in which they lost their chief and several of their warriors."

When the Dutch Church was first built at Hopewell, the Colonel presented the Consistory with a new bell, whose silvery and ringing tones were said to be owing to the large amount of copper and silver which entered into its construction. His name was cast into the mettle. Shortly afterwards he purchased a large tract of land immediately surrounding the church from the heirs of Cornelius Van Wyck and Joshua Carman. All of this property was afterwards given, by will, to

his daughter. During the Revolution, and while the British forces held possession of Long Island, New York City, and parts of Westchester County, the roadway leading through Hopewell, Beekman and Pawlings, was the regular army road to Boston. During this period the elder John Adams, who afterwards succeeded Washington to the Presidency, in writing to his wife from Fishkill, where he had just arrived across the country from Boston, says: "After a march like Hannibal across the Alps, we arrived, last night, at this place, where we found the utmost difficulty to get forage for our horses or lodgings for ourselves, and at last were indebted to the hospitality of a private gentleman, Col. Brinckerhoff, who very kindly cared for us."

Rev. Mr. Seabury, afterwards Bishop Seabury, was, during part of this period, on account of disloyalty, confined at Colonel Brinckerhoff's. The Colonel died in 1789, and was buried in the family vault upon his own property. Much of his private and family history has been lost. The family Bible, containing much valuable material, was burned.

He had eight children, five of whom survived him, and four are yet living.

7-71.—David : born September 19, 1815.

7-72.—Elizabeth : born April 17, 1817.

7-73.—James : born February 19, 1818; died September 23, 1827.

7-74.—Maria : born August 24, 1830; died May 11, 1827.

7-75.—Hannah : born January 21, 1822.

7-76.—A son : born July 3, 1825; died August 4, 1825.

7-77.—Samuel Bevier : born September 4, 1823; died March 26, 1880.

7-78.—Roeliff : born June 28, 1828.

VI-XXXIV.—Henry Roelifsen Brinkerhoff, at the age of six years, came with his father from Adams County, Pennsylvania, to the wilderness of Cayuga County, New York, and grew up on his father's farm on the east shore of the Owasco Lake. Without the advantages of schools, he acquired a good education for the time, and was a man of general intelligence and sterling integrity. He was a man of fine presence and of popular manners, and possessed all the qualities essential for leadership among men.

In the war of 1812, at the age of twenty-five years, he was elected captain of a company, and was attached to the Van Rensselaer expedition into Canada, and subsequently served under Generals Brown, Ripley and Scott. He participated in several engagements, and was taken prisoner at Queenstown. He was taken sick, and was then paroled, and returned home, but never fully recovered from the hardships incident to his soldier life.

In 1814 he married Sarah Swartwout, of Deer Park, Orange County, New York, and settled down upon his father's farm, which he afterwards inherited, and remained there until his removal to Ohio in 1838.

He was one of the foremost men in his county, and a leader in all public affairs. He was elected to the House of Representatives in the Legislature of the State of New York, in 1828, and served two terms with credit to himself and his constituents.

Socially, he was a justice of the peace for many years, an officer in the church, and especially active in military matters.

In 1824 he was the senior Major-General in the militia of the State, and commanded the military escort which accompanied General Lafayette in his progress through the State.

He was an intimate friend of Martin Van Buren, Governors Clinton and Troop, and they often visited him at his home in Owasco. In fact, all of the leaders of the Democratic party knew him well, and valued his counsels highly.

At the death of Governor De Witt Clinton he was one of the pall-bearers.

In 1837, his house having been destroyed by fire, he sold his farm, and in the following year removed to Huron County, Ohio, and settled upon a farm in New Haven Township, adjoining the village of Plymouth, where he resided until his death.

In 1843, although living in a strong Whig district, he was elected to Congress as a Democrat, by an overwhelming majority. He, however, did not live to take his seat, but was taken sick just as he was preparing to go to Washington, and died April 30, 1844, respected and lamented by all.

#### CHILDREN.

7-79.—Peter S.: born March 25, 1817.

7-80.—Maria: born March 25, 1818.

7-81.—Jane: born February 26, 1819.

7-82.—Cornelia: born October 17, 1820; died June 23, 1880.

7-83.—David H.: born December 5, 1822.

7-84.—Abraham C.: born July 11, 1825; died August 5, 1870.

7-85.—Roelif: born April 18, 1827; died August 11, 1846.

7-86.—Martha: born April 23, 1829; died July 8, 1843.

7-87.—Sarah: born October 3, 1835.

7-88.—Isabella: born April 5, 1837; died February 8, 1860.

7-89.—Simion S.: born April 15, 1838; died October 6, 1883.

VI-XXXVII.—George B. Brinkerhoff, born December 27, 1779, in Adams County, Pa., removed with his father, Jacob, to Cayuga County, N. Y., in 1793. He was for many years a Justice of the Peace, and also a leading member and elder in the church. He married Jane Cartright, and had six children, viz., Ann, born December 23, 1801; Levi, born September 17, 1803; Hannah, born March 16, 1809; David, born September 13, 1812; Maria, born September 23, 1815; and Moses, born July 14, 1824. Of these, Ann, Maria, and Moses are still living. Ann resides at Fair Haven, Cayuga County, N. Y.,



eighty-six years old, and has children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Levi married Ardilla Skeel, and left children, one of whom, Henry Sandford, is in the Adjutant General's office at Washington, D. C., a position he has held for twenty years, and has three sons.

Moses resides at Fargo, Dak., and is one of the oldest and most famous railroad conductors in the United States, having occupied that position for thirty-two years, first on the Hudson River Railroad, then upon the Panama Railroad, when first opened in 1855, and subsequently upon various Western roads, upon all of which he secured special recognition for distinguished service.

He married Josephine A. Rabbeson November 21, 1859, and has two children, one of whom, George H. T., is a civil engineer, and the other, Charles B., a railroad conductor.

VI-XXXVIII. — Margaret Brinkerhoff married George Post; their children were William, Hannah, David, Tunis, and Jane.

VI-XL.—Henry I. Brinkerhoff was born in Adams County, Pa., January 5, 1786, and removed with his father to Cayuga County, New York, in 1793. He married Rachel Bevier October 12, 1809, and resided many years in New York State. About fifty years ago he removed to a farm in Plymouth Township, Ohio, where he died October 5, 1847. He had seven children, viz.:

7-64.—Jacob: born August 13, 1810; died July 30, 1880.

7-65.—Sarah: born October 13, 1813.

7-66.—Josiah: born December 6, 1815.

7-67.—Hannah: born June 1, 1818; died February 26, 1875.

7-68.—Margaret: born December 15, 1820; died September 15, 1855.

7-69.—James: born May 23, 1823.

7-70.—Lewis: born June 13, 1826; died July 13, 1832.

VI-XLI.—Martha Brinkerhoff married Peter Selover. Their children were Maria, Abram, Hannah, and David.

VI-XLII.—Isabel Brinkerhoff married John Decker. Their children were Isaac and Brinkerhoff.

VI-XLIII.—James Brinkerhoff married Rachel Bevier.