

The Wilhelmus or William Westfael mentioned in the September newsletter who married Margaret Hayne, was the son of Zymen or Simon Westfael born 1718 and died April 21, 1805. His wife was Jannetje or Jane Westbroek baptized at Kingston Jan. 10, 1720. They lived on what is now South Maple Avenue, Port Jervis where Simon, in 1755, had a grist mill, several houses, barns and other buildings on the brook known then, as now, The Mill Brook. There were other mills along this stream, one just below where the Steeney Kill enters this brook about 1 1/2 miles below Tri-States. A few years ago city employees at this site uncovered some of the masonry of the old mill. Many people still remember the mill operated by the Cox family which was built across the stream and derived its power from that source and later by electric power. The old building was destroyed by a spectacular fire some years ago and C. J. Marion constructed a large stone building on the site occupied until recently by the Chevrolet Sales and Service Agency.

The mill, houses and other buildings of Simon and Jane were destroyed in Brant's raid of July 20, 1779 and all members of the family forced to flee. They had a son, Simon or Simeon, who married Sarah Cole and lived on the homestead. When Sarah heard the Indians were coming, she hastily buried some of the family valuables in a cornfield nearby. Included was a pair of shears, a prized family heirloom and which were a rarity in those days. After the Revolutionary War, she and Simeon moved across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania opposite the homestead of Simeon's father. There they erected a stone house along the river which is still standing. The reef of rocks in the river was called Sim's Clip in memory of Simeon. Sarah's parents, David and Eleanor Westfall Cole, lived there for a number of years.

Successive owners were Col. Samuel Fowler, Simeon Westfall (Grandson) and Oliver Dimmick who kept a hotel and a ferry in upper Matamoras in the middle 1800's. He acquired the ferry across the Delaware River built by Simeon Westfall, a grandson of Simeon and Sarah, whose father David Westfall owned at one time, nearly all of the present Matamoras and lived on what is now Heater's or Christian Hill, later to be the site of the County Alms House and the home of the VonKarner family who at the time of World War #2 had a factory on lower Jersey Ave. (location the present Grand Union Market) and manufactured flares and signalling products for military and commercial use. The site of the home of Simeon who built the ferry is that of the old building on the river bank just above Driller's Brook.

David and his wife, Jemima Cuddeback, had a large family, the youngest of whom was Sarah, born March 29, 1802. She married James W. Bennet who lived at Tri-States on a part of the land previously owned by Sarah's ancestors, Simon and Jane Westfall. The old house was on the easterly side of the brook and was burned by the Fire Dep't of Port Jervis a couple of years ago as a fire hazard. At one time, the site was thriving farmland. James' son had this to say about his father's wedding, and the events which followed: "The day following the wedding, my father came for his bride and the vehicle was a two-horse lumber box wagon with a spring seat. The wedding procession to the groom's home was the said wagon with the bride and groom on the spring seat, the groom driving and the body of the wagon piled high with choice feather beds and pieced bed quilts, filled in with wool instead of cotton, homespun blankets and blue and white bedspreads, linen sheets and pillow cases, tablecloths and coverings etc. woven by the bride, churn, tables, the tops of which when turned over revealed a seat. The bride carried on her lap a mirror with quaintly carved frame; Biblical characters painted on the upper portion of the glass and the whole surmounted by Cherubim carved in the wood. She also carried a large family Bible, leather bound, for daily use in the new family and for the keeping of family records. Following the wagon were the bride's father and mother and one of her brothers driving a small herd of cows and a number of sheep. This was the visible dowry of the bride as a daughter of a well-to-do farmer. There was a gathering of the numerous wedding

guests at the home of the groom that night. Numerous guests, from the fact that naturally they invited their relatives and that included about all the old families in this portion of the Delaware and Neversink valleys. This reception at the groom's house was called an "Infair".

The people of that time were unanimous in opinion for proprieties and ceremonials. The minister was a most reverent gentleman and at his pastoral visits all the members of the household gathered to give grave but most courteous greeting to hear him read the Scriptures and the prayer invoking the blessing of God on the household. A part of the ceremonial, not to be overlooked, was the offering of cake and wine or whiskey to the Dominie. (This was over 100 years ago).

When a death occurred in the family, two young men were selected to go on horseback through the valley and invite the people to the funeral and only those invited attended the funeral. On the day of the burial, these same two young men stood in the outer hall and offered everyone a drink of wine or whiskey. One held the decanter and the other, the glasses and a pitcher of water. Friends, for a considerable distance up and down the valley, were expected for dinner. These customs have not been in vogue for nearly a century. Church observances were equally strict. Every old Dutch family was represented Sundays at the Old Mackechemach Church and ordinarily the head of the family was there and sat in the front end of the pew. In those early days, they usually had morning and afternoon services with a long noon spell for the people to eat their lunches and visit. The church was not heated and many brought metal foot stoves filled with hot coals and all were welcome at the home of Cornelius Cole, who lived nearby on the present Cole St. In winter, the worshippers at church were warmly clad, their clothing being of homespun woolen. The men's clothing was made by a tailor who visited annually the homes in the valley, cutting the garments from cloth woven by the women of the household of wool, sheared from their own sheep and dyed in their own dye pots. The women usually made their own dresses of Linsey-Woolsey, woven by themselves, but wore silk dresses for state occasions made by a seamstress who visited their homes. The stockings for winter wear for both men and women were knit by the women and the stout calfskin boots were made from skins of animals raised on their own farms and sent away to be tanned. A shoemaker made annual visits and fitted them out for the year. My mother said they were very choice of those fine calfskin shoes and in the summer time carried their linen stockings, fancy open work, as at present, and shoes in their hands until near the church.

The older generation had their share of fun also. As above stated, members of the Westfall families that lived in Pennsylvania had to ford the river to get home from church or use the ferry. One of them was a young man in his early manhood and to him a certain spinster in the congregation took an especial liking much to his disgust. She was so eager to get married that the young men avoided her, but on one Sunday afternoon after the services in the Mackechemach Church she insisted on riding home with him and meeting his folks. He explained to her that the mare he was riding was tricky and would not carry double, but all to no avail. So he helped her up on the saddle cloth behind the saddle and they started for the river, she with her arms around him lovingly.

All went well until the ford was reached not far from his home and he told her to hold fast for the mare was getting nervous. About midway across, in the deepest water of the ford about up to the mare's belly, he dug his heel in the mare's flank and her heels came up and both riders landed waist deep in the river as he put it "like a pan of milk from off a top pantry shelf." The mare ran away and they both waded to shore, she saying some vigorous things about "That Mare". He escorted her to his home to get a change of clothing. She returned to the New York shore by the ferry.