

**The  
Johnson Family  
Holland to Long Island  
to  
New Jersey & New York  
and on to  
Minnesota**

An Englishman, Henry Hudson, on behalf of the Dutch East India Company, sailed the eastern shore of New Jersey and anchored at Sandy Hook on September 3, 1609. He familiarized himself with the entire area and finally sailed up the river that today bears his name. Entering the New York bay in the ship Halve Maen (Half Moon), he named the island Staaten Eyelandt in honor of the Dutch Parliament - the States General or Staaten.

By virtue of grants, the West India Company built many forts and established trading posts including Fort Orange in 1614 which would later become Albany, the capital of the state of New York. In 1626, the Dutch purchased the isle of Manhattan from the Lenape Indian tribe for trinkets worth twenty-four dollars. They established New Amsterdam at the tip of Manhattan. Small towns with Dutch names were soon established including New Harlem, Yonkers, Bronks and Breucklen.

Brooklyn, one of five boroughs on New York City is coextensive with Kings County at the southwestern end of Long Island. At the time of early European settlement the site of present-day Brooklyn was occupied by the Canarsie people, an Algonquian-speaking group. The first European settlement took place in 1636 when Dutch farmers purchased tracts near Gowanus Bay and founded the community of Amersfort, the present-day Flatlands, New York. In 1646 a settlement not far from the site of Borough Hall was patented and named Breucklen which is Dutch for marshland.

On March 20, 1664 England issued a document that established the bounds of New Jersey. The province was called Nova Cesarea or New Jersey in honor of Carteret who had been the governor of the Island of Jersey. England subsequently dispatched a fleet and land forces to New Jersey to disburse the Dutch and Swedes who resisted the English claim. Subsequently the whole area became subject to the British Crown.

After the English seized the City of New Amsterdam in 1664 and renamed it New York, they extended its boundaries to include all of Manhattan Island. Three years later, the village of Breucklen was united with several other adjoining villages. In 1683, when the Province of New York was first divided into counties, the City of New York also became New York County. The British occupied the entire Brooklyn area until 1783.

After the American Revolution the community grew and its name became Anglicized as Brooklyn. In 1801 the New York Naval shipyard was established. Ferry service across the East river to Manhattan began in 1814. In 1834 the Village and the Town of Brooklyn were combined to form the City of Brooklyn. In 1854 Williamsburgh and Bushwick were annexed to Brooklyn.

The original city of New York was a tiny area on the island's southern tip. The rest of Manhattan consisted of scattered farms and rural villages. Slowly the urbanization spread northward. In 1874, to accommodate this growth, New York city and county annexed from Westchester County what is now

known as the western Bronx. Meanwhile the village of Brooklyn became a city and expanded to cover all of Kings County.

In 1894 a vote was taken in New York, Westchester, Kings, Queens and Richmond counties on a proposal to combine New York city with Brooklyn, eastern Bronx, part of Queens County and all of Richmond County to form the second largest city in the world (after London). Although only 50.1 percent of Kings County was in favor, the majority ruled. In 1895 New York City annexed the eastern Bronx. The remaining areas were replaced on January 1, 1898 by the borough designation to form a new City of New York.

The oldest European settlement in New Jersey was at Bergen, dating back to 1616. It was founded by Dutch Colonists and named by the Danes for Bergen back in Norway and to the remembrance of the Dutch of the Bergen in the Province of North Brabant, in Holland. The word Bergen means “the hills” similar to the geographical terrain upon which the town of Bergen, New Jersey resides.

That British Jersey provincial government remained in place until the areas division into East and West Jersey on Jul 1, 1676. Bergen County was established in December 1682 when the Assembly of East Jersey divided the Province into four original counties: Bergen, Essex, Middlesex and Monmouth. It originally included the area that is today known as Hudson County and part of the area that today is known as Passaic County.

The Dutch granted feudal domains along the Hudson River to those who would transport at least 50 workers to the colony. The first was settled by Captain David Pieterse de Vries in 1639 but was abandoned by 1641 due to conflict with the Indians. A second colony was established under the sponsorship of Cornelius Melyn. They arrived at Staten Island aboard the vessel *Netherlands Fortune* on December 19, 1650. Among the 70 emigrants were Barent Driessen, his wife Aeltie and their infant son, Jan Barentsen. The family came directly from Oostenengh, an estate near Ahmen, a few miles north of Zutphen, a town on the Yssel River in the Province of Gelderland, Holland.

On September 16, 1655 Indians suddenly attacked the colony. Fifty-one were held captive until a ransom was paid by Cornelius Melyn. Among those killed were Barent Driessen and his wife Aeltie. Among the 62 survivors was “a boy of Berent Driessen from Oostenengh”.

On November 23, 1655 Lourens Jansen appeared before the New Amsterdam City Hall Orphanmasters and reported that Barent Drisen and Aeltie N., his wife, had perished on Staten Island during the latest disaster and that there remained a minor child called Jan Barentsen, about 7 years, who was at his house. The Orphanmasters commissioned Jan Eversen and Lourens Jansen as guardians.

As an orphan boy, without kin in America, Jan Barentsen made his own way in the world. By 1674 he had purchased his own land, house and barn in Gravesend, Long Island, New York.

The original Dutch register of the Dutch Reformed Church at Flatbush, Long Island revealed his name with the appendant “Van Driest”. On April 26, 1679 Jan Barentz Van Driest, “young man from Zutphen in Gelderland, residing in Gravesend” was betrothed to Jannetje Willems Van Borkloo. They were married on May 18, 1679 in Amesfoort, Long Island, New York.

Jan's aforementioned marriage record is an example of the Dutch use of patronymic naming patterns where a child's name is shown with the name of a father or ancestor by the addition of a prefix or a suffix so as to show descent. A male child born to father whose given name was “Jan (John)” would be

considered "John's son" (hence the name Johnson). Applying the naming concept to the forthcoming family of Jan (John) Barentsen, that son would likely be named Barent Johnson.

The Flatbush, Long Island, New York church registers indicate that Jan and Jannetje had a son Barent baptized 18 December 1681 in Amersfoort. Later came daughters Margaretje and Cornelia (named after Jannetje's mother) and sons Jan (John) and William.

Jan Barentsen died on October 5, 1697 in Gravesend, Kings County, Long Island, New York. He did not leave a will. His son Barent Johnson became administer of the undistributed estate on February 28, 1706, over eight years after his father's death. The part remaining for distribution was only personal property as the real estate had been previously sold by the widow and by Brent, the heir. During that period 1697-1706 widow Jannetje sold a part and remarried, on December 15, 1699, to Elias Hubbard to whom she conveyed her portion of the real estate. By law, however, the remaining two-thirds of the real estate fell to the eldest son, Barent Johnson. He was the only one of the five children who was of age and, under the law, could and did sell the property without signatures of his siblings. The sale was to his mother's second husband on January 4, 1703.

1. Jan and Jannetje Jansen's first child, Barent Johnson, was born December 18, 1681 Flatbush, Kings County, Long Island, New York. In 1708 in Kings County, Long Island, New York he married Maria Stillwell. The daughter of Nicholas Stillwell and Catherine (Catalyntje) Huyberts, she was born about 1683 in Gravesend, Kings County, Long Island, New York. Barent died after after 1738 in Gravesend, Kings County, Long Island, New York. Maria died in 1715 Gravesend, Kings County, Long Island, New York. They had five children: **Nicholas Johnson (Claes Barentsen Jansen)**, Jan (John) Johnson, Catherine Johnson, Barent Johnson and William Johnson.
2. Barent and Maria Johnson's first child, **Nicholas Johnson**, was born about 1710 in Gravesend, Kings County, New York. About 1733 in Middlesex County, New Jersey he married Antje Wyckoff. The daughter of Pieter (Peter) Wyckoff and Willemtje Jansen Schenck, she was born February 18, 1711 in Middletown, Monmouth County, New Jersey. Nicholas died in 1781 in Middlesex County, New Jersey. Antje died November 23, 1775 in Middlesex County, New Jersey. They are probably interred at the Six Mile Run Dutch Reformed Church Cemetery, Franklin Township, Somerset County, New Jersey. They had four children: Willemtje Johnson, Peter Johnson, **Barent Johnson** and Antje Johnson.
3. Nicholas and Antje Johnson's third child, **Barent Johnson**, was born August 26, 1746 in Middlesex County, New Jersey. In 1776 in Middlesex County, New Jersey he married Elizabeth Terhune. The daughter of John Terhune and Nelche Duryea, she was born September 14, 1742 in Flatlands, Kings County, Long Island, New York. Barent died February 02, 1813 in Amsterdam, Montgomery County, New York. Elizabeth died February 13, 1813 in Amsterdam, Montgomery County, New York. They are interred in the Old Hagmann Cemetery, Montgomery County, New York. They had six children: Nicholas Johnson, **John (Jan) Terhune Johnson**, Petres Johnson, (another) Petres Johnson, Abraham Johnson and Barnet Johnson.
4. Barent and Elizabeth Johnson's second child, **John Terhune Johnson**, was born August 19, 1770 in Franklin Township, Somerset County, New Jersey. On December 18, 1791 in Franklin Township, Somerset County, New Jersey he married Rebecca Wetherill. The daughter of Thomas Wetherell and Rachel Fitz-Randolph, she was born February 25, 1771 in Middlesex County, New Jersey. John died February 12, 1834 in Amsterdam, Montgomery County, New York. Rebecca died September 01, 1837 in Amsterdam, Montgomery County, New York. They are interred in the Perth Cemetery, Perth,

Fulton County, New York They had eleven children: Thomas W. Johnson, Barnet W. Johnson, Rachel Randall Johnson, Elizabeth Trehune Johnson, Isaac Van Pelt Johnson, Sarah (Sally) S. Johnson, Anna McDowel Johnson, Abigail Wetherell Johnson, Abraham Wilson Johnson, John Prone Johnson and **Nathaniel Randolph Johnson**.

5. John and Rebecca Johnson's eleventh child, **Nathaniel Randolph Johnson**, was born June 17, 1815 in Amsterdam, Montgomery County, New York. On February 12, 1833 in Amsterdam, Montgomery County, New York he married Hannah Bostwick. The daughter of John Bostwick and Prudence Thorn, she was born May 03, 1812 in Amsterdam, Montgomery County, New York. About 1875 Nathaniel and Hannah and four of their children moved to Wisconsin. Nathaniel died May 25, 1885 in La Crosse, La Crosse County, Wisconsin. Hannah died March 12, 1894 in La Crosse, La Crosse County, Wisconsin. They are interred in Oak Grove Cemetery, La Crosse, La Crosse County, Wisconsin. They had six children: **John Bostwick Johnson**, Prudence Ann Johnson, Orren Thatcher Johnson, William Pearson Johnson, Sarah Elizabeth Johnson and Phoebe Jane Johnson.

5.1. Nathaniel and Hannah Johnson's first child, **John Bostwick Johnson**, was born June 23, 1834 in Amsterdam, Montgomery County, New York. His first marriage was to Anna E. Schuyler on January 03, 1856 in Three Mile Bay (Lyme), Jefferson County, New York. The daughter of Peter P. Schuyler and Elizabeth Becker, she was born May 21, 1830 in Montgomery County, New York. John and wife Anna accompanied his parents on their move from New York but did not remain with them in Wisconsin. Anna Johnson died March 14, 1875 in Rice County, Minnesota. Nathaniel and Anna had three children: Schuyler Jay Johnson, Estelle Johnson and Clara H. Johnson.

On May 31, 1876 in Owatonna, Steele County, Minnesota, John Bostwick Johnson remarried to Electra Mahala Swanger. The daughter of Abraham Swanger and Helen A. Tripp, she was born January 15, 1856 in Niles, Berrien County, Michigan. John died October 30, 1915 in Rice County, Minnesota. Electra died January 15, 1856 in Rice County, Minnesota. They were interred in Richland Community Cemetery, Rice County, Minnesota. They had five children: **Jennie June Johnson**, William Guy Johnson, Chauncey Fox Johnson, Minnie F. Johnson and Jay Bertrum Johnson.

5.1.1 John and Electra Johnson's first child, **Jennie June Johnson**, was born January 20, 1878 in Richland Township, Rice County, Minnesota. On July 01, 1895 in Kenyon, Goodhue County, Minnesota she married Harmon Francis Purfeerst. The son of Karl Friedrich Ernst Purfürst, a.k.a. Charles Purfeerst, and Mary Jane Brown, he was born March 22, 1873 in Richland Township, Rice County, Minnesota. Harmon died April 19, 1955 in Moses Lake, Grant County, Washington. Jennie died December 27, 1958 in Seattle, King County, Washington. They were interred in the Evergreen Cemetery, Seattle, King County, Washington. They had three children: Myles Archie Purfeerst, **Walter Everett Purfeerst** and George William Purfeerst.

5.1.1.1. Myles Archie Purfeerst (1898-1970) married Matilda Augusta Neas (1889-1978) and had children Alice Dorothy Purfeerst and Calvin Myles Purfeerst.

5.1.1.2. **Walter Everett Purfeerst** (1900-1965) married Ella Louise Weiss (1903-1963) and had children Roger Duane Purfeerst and **Donald Lee Purfeerst** (the author).

5.1.1.3. George William Purfeerst (1904-1959) married Helga Olive Hansen (1907-1999) and had children LaVerne Elaine Purfeerst, Robert George Purfeerst, Harmon Axle Purfeerst and La Jean Ann Purfeerst.

Author's Comment: Based on the aforementioned the author's Johnson family line in North America extends back to 1650 and the Colony of the Dutch East India Company, Long Island, New York.



**Harmon Jennie (Johnson) Purfeerst Family – 1904  
Sons George (left) and Walter (right) and Myles (rear)**



**Jennie (Johnson) Purfeerst Family – 1955**  
**Left to Right**  
**Sons Myles Purfeerst, Walter Purfeerst and George Purfeerst**



**Harmon Purfeerst Milk Delivery, Morton County, North Dakota – 1928**  
**with Granddaughter LaVerne Purfeerst**