

## **IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR ANCESTORS ...**

# **FRENCH HUGUENOTS IN SEARCH OF THEIR OWN HOME**

**Abraham  
Hasbrouck  
(1650 – 1716/17) &  
Marie Deyo (1653 –  
1741) / Christian  
Deyo (1615 – 1693) &  
Jeanne Wibau  
(1624 – ?) / Pierre  
Deyo (c. 1648 – ?) &  
Agatha Nichol  
(? – ?)**

**— *Bradley Rymph***

### **VISITS TO NEW PALTZ, NEW YORK:**

**September 2, 1995 (with José Baquiran)  
July 8, 1999 (with José Baquiran, Albert and  
Edna Mae Rymph)  
May 24, 2014  
September 15, 2017 (with José Baquiran)**

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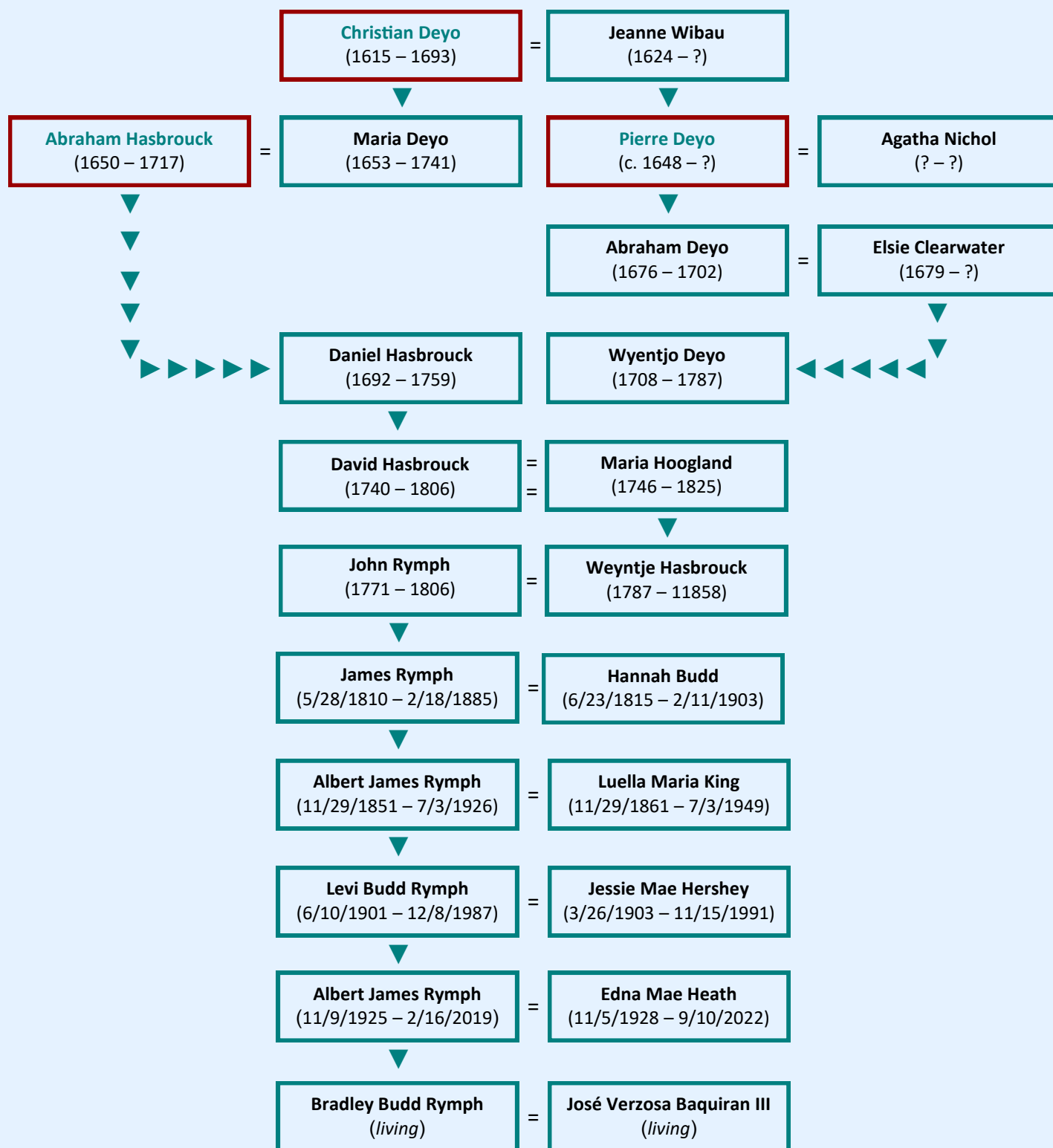
In the 1500s, the Protestant Reformation was gaining strength in France, as it was in much of Europe. Most Protestants in that country were known as Huguenots, whose religious beliefs were inspired by the writings of the French theologian John Calvin. Like Calvinists in other parts of Europe, the Huguenots were harshly critical of the doctrine and worship of the Roman Catholic Church. In particular, they opposed the images, saints, prayers, and hierarchy of Catholicism as not helpful toward individuals' paths toward redemption. They saw Christian life as something to be expressed not in institutional sacraments and rituals but in living lives of simple faith in God, relying upon God for salvation.

While the Reformation led to fighting between Catholics and Protestants in many countries, some of the worst violence was in France. In the mid-1600s, King Louis XIV decided to eliminate the Huguenots from France, and Huguenots fled the country. After spending some time in Holland, Germany, and England, many of them sailed to America.

In the 1660s and '70s, some Huguenots started settling in the adjoining village of Wiltwyck (now Kingston) and Hurley, New York. Wiltwyck and Hurley, however, were Dutch communities, and the Huguenots wanted a place of their

## HOW WE'RE RELATED

*Abraham and Maria Hasbrouck's son Daniel (1692 –1759), and Pierre and Agatha Deyo's granddaughter Wyentje Deyo (1708 – 1787) married each other. Their granddaughter Weyntje Hasbrouck (1787 – 1858) married John Rymph (1771 – 1808). John Rymph was my great-great-great-grandfather through my father, Albert James Rymph.*





own. They found a beautiful spot of land near the Walkill River. Other European settlers before them had taken land they wanted by cheating the Native Americans who had lived there for centuries.

Early local histories, such as Ralph LaFevre's *History of New Paltz, New York, and Its Old Families*, claimed that the Huguenots took a different approach — that the Huguenots recognized the local Munsee Lenape natives' right to the land and carefully negotiated a peaceful purchase from them. Some more recent historians are skeptical of this perhaps glorified view of the Huguenots buying the Munsee Lenape's land.

In any case, on September 15, 1677, the natives officially sold the land to a group of 12 Huguenot men. Two weeks later, on September 29, New York's colonial governor signed a "patent" confirming this purchase.\* (Because of

this, the 12 Huguenot men became known as the "Patentees.") Early in 1678, the Huguenots moved to the new community, which they named New Paltz. A key player in these negotiations was a Patentee named **Abraham Hasbrouck**. Among the other 11 Patentees were **Christian** and **Pierre Deyo** (the father and brother of Abraham's wife, Maria Deyo) and Abraham's brother Jean Hasbrouck.

New Paltz became a thriving, deeply religious community. In the 1690s and the following decades, the Huguenots (and the generation after them) began

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accepted as accurate, however, since LeFevre's book is filled with errors and obvious over-romanticizations of the truth, and many of the local legends transmitted down through the generations likewise originated from uncertain sources. The fact that such stories are difficult to verify should not in and of itself be a cause to question their accuracy. But information gleaned from other sources does call into question the belief that relations between the two groups were always free of tension. Even the events surrounding the purchase of New Paltz lands by its founders (generally recognized as a friendly affair) reveal the Native American's mistrust of the process of land acquisition practiced by the Europeans.

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\* Eric Roth, archivist for the Huguenot Historical Society, disagreed somewhat with this interpretation in 1999. He wrote, "These stories cannot be fully



*Abraham [Daniel] Hasbrouck House*

replacing their original homes with stone structures, designed in styles that the Patentees had left behind in France. These houses were built so well that many of them still stand three centuries or more later. Today, they are operated as a museum, "Historic Huguenot Street," by the Huguenot Historical Society.

One of these houses, traditionally known as the "Abraham Hasbrouck House," was long believed to have been built in three sections by the Patentee himself between 1692 and 1712. However, tree-ring dating (known as dendrochronology) revealed in 2001 that the house's center room had been built around 1721, the north room had been



built around 1728, and the south room around 1734 — meaning that Abraham himself never saw the house, since he died in 1717. Thus, the house was actually built by Abraham's son Daniel. Abraham's wife, Maria Deyo, did live in



*Deyo House*

## SLAVERY IN NEW PALTZ: A Long-Hidden, Shameful Reality

When I first visited in New Paltz in 1999, I don't remember exhibits or the tour guides ever mentioning Huguenot enslavement of African people — just as I don't recall any mention of the native Munsee Lenape people who had lived in the area long before the Huguenots ever arrived, except for the romanticized story of how the Huguenots had treated the indigenous people “fairly” compared to other European settlers. In fact, I don't recall any mention of slavery in New Paltz until my fourth visit to Historic Huguenot Street in 2017. On that visit, as we were being given a tour of the Abraham (Daniel) Hasbrouck house — home of my own ancestors — we were taken down into the house's dank cellar and told how it had been the home of the Hasbrouck family's slaves.

John W. Barry of *The Poughkeepsie Journal* discussed this history in an article in 2018:

*They lived in cellars and likely were locked in at night to prevent their escape.*

*Some wore steel collars around their neck that identified the family that owned them. That way, if they did escape, their captors would know where to return them.*

*They were possessions. They were property. They were slaves. And they were owned not by a family in Virginia or South Carolina, but by the Huguenots, the original European settlers of New Paltz. ...*

*The historical record of slavery in New Paltz begins in 1674, three years before its founding, when Louis DuBois purchased two African slaves at a public auction held in Kingston, then called Esopus.*

*By 1790, the New Paltz community had grown to 2,309. Every patentee, or founder, in New Paltz owned slaves, according to Historic Huguenot Street, with 77 slaveholders owning 302 slaves.*

*Today, those who visit Historic Huguenot Street can see homes and other structures likely built with slave labor.*

*According to Kara Gaffken, director of public programming for Historic Huguenot Street, a National Historic Landmark District in New Paltz, the average Huguenot family owned one to four slaves. And the cellar at Historic Huguenot Street's Abraham Hasbrouck House offers insight into how they lived.*

*In 1755, at least two male slaves and two female slaves older than 14 would have lived in that slave cellar, which would have had a table, furniture, fireplace and sleeping areas. The female slaves would have likely worked in the cellar while the men may have worked outside.*

— Excerpted from John W. Barry, “Slavery's Hidden History in the Mid-Hudson Valley Coming to Light,” *The Poughkeepsie Journal*, April 25, 2018.





*Reconstructed Old French Church*

(probably wood frame) house on the same site where Daniel later built his house.

In the early 1700s (i.e., sometime after their father's death), Maria Deyo Hasbrouck's brother, Pierre Deyo, began building a modest stone home for his own family a short walk from Abraham's lot. The house — initially a one-room dwelling — was eventually expanded to three rooms. Five generations later, Pierre's descendant Abraham Deyo Broadhead and his wife Gertude Deyo Broadhead decided that their newly found wealth and social status required a grander home. In 1894 they laid plans to remodel the original structure, having decided

the house until she died in 1741. Although it is now not known precisely where Abraham lived, the assumption of the Hasbrouck Family Association is that he probably lived in a simpler



*Memorial Plaque for  
Abraham and Maria (Deyo)  
Hasbrouck on Their  
Presumed Grave Sites*

*Memorial Plaque for  
Christian and Jeanne (Wibau)  
Deyo on Their  
Presumed Grave Sites*



*Memorial Plaque for  
Pierre and Agatha (Nichol)  
Deyo on Their  
Presumed Grave Sites*

against what would have been the simpler path of tearing down the ancestral home and building a new structure from level ground. Instead, to preserve the continuity of their family, they built a completely separate frame house up and over the original house.

After that remodeling, little remained visible of the original house. The original two rooms of the old stone house were transformed into the Parlor and Dining Room of the new structure. The original stone walls are still visible in part on the Huguenot Street side of the first floor of the 1894 house, but where the front door originally stood, a bay window was put in its place (and remains today).

Shortly after establishing New Paltz, the Patentees and their families established their original French Reformed congregation in a primitive log structure in 1683. Within a few decades, that small building was unable to meet the needs of their growing community. A larger, stone church structure was built in 1717 for both worship and education, and served New Paltz until the 1770s when a larger church was constructed up the street and the 1717 structure was torn down.

In 1972, the 1717 church was rebuilt based on what information survived about its original design and

construction. The church is now known as the “Crispell Memorial French Church,” in appreciation for the reconstruction being funded by the family association of another New Paltz Patentee, Antoine Christell (who, interestingly, was the only one of the 12 Patentees who chose never to live in New Paltz). Adjacent to the church is the ancient burying ground, in which many of the early members of the New Paltz community were buried.

## TO LEARN MORE

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