

WASSONNEAU, CLAUDIUS GERMAIN

Born: 1769 in Angoulême, France
Died: June 19, 1846 in Red Hook, New York
Buried: Lutheran Cemetery, Red Hook, N. Y.
Married: Catharine Livingston,
daughter of Robert G. and Mar-
garet Rude Livingston, of Dutchess
County, New York.

1st Generation of Wassonneau's in America



One account states that Claudius Germain Wassonneau was a son of a house which traced its ancestral lineage back to the days when France of the Bourbons was at the height of its glory. This seems the more likely account, as the descendants have heirlooms with crests engraved on them, painted miniatures, dueling pistols, a beautiful French clock with Chinese etc. The crest, above, was copied from one of the spoons left by this French gentleman. Description of crest, etc. follows later.
Claudius Germain Wassonneau fled France because of the French Revolution, or perhaps

because of religious persecution, and came to America in 1790, after stopping first at Haiti with his brother Pierre. That he was a man of considerable education and wealth can be tested by his occupations when he arrived here.

He landed at Santo Domingo and then the next we hear of him he was in Charleston, South Carolina, then he settled in Red Hook, Dutchess County, New York. His brother Pierre (Peter) Wassonneau (or Santo Domingo) was married in New York City and a record of this is on file in 1794. It is thought that both Pierre and his son died of cholera in New York City. There was an epidemic there at that time.

According to an account in the "Red Hook Advertiser" Claudius Germain Wassonneau was a merchant, though ~~Wassonneau~~ highly educated, was unable to speak the English language. That he was one of the ablest of men, who made their home in Dutchess County. He mastered the English language in intricate detail, finally, and earned an enviable reputation as a schoolmaster. This shrewd Frenchman entered into the mercantile trade with a general store, which venture proved exceedingly profitable, and the owner was able to amass considerable gain both in money and in property. Another account says that he started a silk mill, but that this project failed. In fact this latter may be very true, as he might very likely have been a manufacturer of silk in France and wished to carry on this occupation in America.

Red Hook in Red Hook used to be known as Wassonneau Place and was laid out by Claudius Germain Wassonneau and was sold and owned by the family for nearly 150 years. There is also a pond in Red Hook called Wassonneau Pond.

"In the 18th Century" (Vol. 14 of 1929 of the Year Book of the Dutchess County Historical Society) "trade relations between the Unit-

states and the West Indies were very close, and, as a result of which interesting communication many men bearing French names came from the islands in the last quarter of the century. Also there was an exodus from France to America in the 1790s, due to the French Revolution. Contemporaneous with Chandonet, de Cantillon and de Venant, were 5 men of French extraction in what is now the town of Red Hook. Pierre Joseph Prelesnac (first husband of Catharine Livingston), Claudius Germain Massonneau, Peter de Labigarré, Claudius Gabriel Fontaine and Daniel Brimo or Frizock.

"H. Prelesnac (a son of the Marguils de Car-dalac, Chevalier de St Louis of the Parish of Saint Michael, San Domingo,) came to Red Hook, married Catharine Livingston, whose parents Robert G. and Margaret Hyde Livingston lived near the present Rock City, N. Y.. He died in 1794 or 95.

"The will of H. Prelesnac was witnessed by Pierre Massonneau, who was presumably the Peter Massonneau of Santo Domingo, whose marriage in New York City in 1794 is on record.

"In this association of the names Prelesnac and Massonneau may lie some explanation for the fact that H. Prelesnac's widow (Catharine Livingston) married for her second husband Claudius Germain Massonneau (Born 1769, died 1846, another of the Frenchmen who lived in Red Hook, Dutchess County, New York."

THE COAT OF ARMS

According to a Heraldic book from the International Institute, Flushing, N. Y. and now at Lord and Taylors in New York (a French book) none of the three Massonneau crests exactly tally with the sketch on the previous page. It has been copied here, however, as the right side of the crest does resemble one described quite often the wife's crest was added

to the husbands, so that eventually the original crest lost signs of the "shield". Copied below are the three French descriptions with their (near) English translations. Take your choice. A trip to France might prove something on this.

MASSONNEAU - Pelton (this is in the district of Angoulême): Argent à cinq trevoils de sable. 2 - 1 et 2. (Five trevoils in dark brown on silver, 2, 1 and 2)

MASSONNEAU - Lorraine: De gueules à trois étoiles d'argent rangées en bande. (Three silver stars arranged on a red band)

MASSONNEAU - Born (near Germany): (An. 15 oct. 1601) Coupé ondes d'azur sur argent. A une massue de couleur bruni, posée en pal, brochant, sur le tout. Boutons d'un tertre de glaise en pointe et surmonté d'un stèle d'argent. Crest en sautoir de carnation, ceint et couronné de lierre, posant la main droite sur un bûche et tenant de sa gauche une massue, appuyée sur son genou. L. (Mantle) d'argent et d'azur. (Waving silver sword on blue with a club of brownish color posed like a fencing sword (dominant)). Back-ground: A pointed green hill surmounted by a silver star. Crest: A ferocious man (purple savage) girded and crowned with ivy, right hand placed on hip, his left hand grasping a club that rests on his shoulder. Mantle is of silver on blue.

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MASONREAU, CLAUDIUS GERMAIN (cont.)

MASONREAU, Catharine Livingston (Proseuse
wife of Claudius Germain
Masonneau.

Born: 1768

Died: Apr. 3, 1832

Buried: Lutheran Cemetery, Red Hook,
N.Y.

Married: 1st. M. Pierre Joseph Pro-
seuse (son of the Marquis de
Cardillac, Chevalier de St.
Louis of the Parish of St.
Michael, San Domingo), who
died about 1794-5
2nd: Claudius Germain
Masonneau

Two children: Robert Claudius and
Catharine

Fifth Generation of Livingston's in
America

Daughter of Robert G. and Margaret
Hude Livingston who lived
near Rock City, Dutchess Coun-
ty, New York.

Catharine Livingston's father (4th
generation of Livingston's in
America) was the first Cham-
cellor of the State of New
York and also Minister to
France.

EARLY LIVINGSTON HISTORY

1st Generation: ROBERT LIVINGSTON was born,
Dec. 13, 1654 in Ancrum, in Towlodale,
Northumberland, Scotland. He was the first
ancestor of the Livingston family in Amer-
ica. His father, John Livingston was a
Scottish Presbyterian divine, who was bap-
tized in 1663 for nonconformity and went
to Rotterdam, where he died in 1672.

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Robert Livingston (1st Gen. in Amer-
ica) fled with his father to Rotterdam and
learned the Dutch language in his adop-
ed home and in 1674 emigrated to Amer-
ica two years after the death of his
father. In 1676 he held reason-
able employment in Albany as secretary
of the commissaries, which office he held
until Albany became a city in 1686.

In the latter year he received from
Gov. Thomas Dongan a grant of a large tract
of land, which in 1715 was confirmed by
royal charter from George I, granting him
and other lands acquired by purchase of
Indians, into Livingston Manor. The first
conveyance to land to Robert Livingston was
dated July 12, 1683 and was for 3,000 acres
on HENRIK Hoof of Jansen's Kill. The deed
was executed by 3 Indians and 2 Europeans.
This patent bears the date of July, 27, 1683
and comprised 100,000 acres on the
Hudson River. The additional privilege
of electing a representative to the
General Assembly of the colony, and two as
stables, were conferred upon the tenants.

Of the Manors erected in New York, the
principal of which were those of Rensselaer
Livingston, Cortlandt, Philipburg and Red
Bank, that of Livingston was, with the ex-
ception of the first, the largest, though
not comparatively the richest or most
valuable. This manor embraced large part
of what are now the counties of Dutchess
and Columbia, N.Y. Nearly 6,000 acres
were taken away from it as a settlement
for the Palatines, who came out with Gov.
Robert Hunter in 1710, which grant was
called Germanstown.

Robert Livingston (1st Gen.) married,
about 1683, Alice, widow of the Rev. John
(sometimes called Patroon) Nicholas Van
Hemester, and daughter of Philip Pieter
Schuyler, by whom he had 3 sons:

(Livingston con't.)

- 1 - Philip
- 2 - Robert Jr.
- 3 - Gilbert

Robert Livingston (1st Gen.) died in Albany Apr. 20, 1728

Philip Livingston (2nd Gen.), who succeeded to the manorial estate was born in Albany July 8 1686. He was for some time deputy secretary of Indian affairs under his father, and, on the resignation of the latter, in 1723, succeeded to the secretaryship. In 1709 he was a member of the Provincial Assembly Council until his death in New York City, Feb. 2, 1749. He married Catharine, daughter of Peter Van Brugh, of Albany, and, during the latter part of his life entertained with great magnificence at his 3 residences in New York City, Albany and the Manor. Among his children were:

ROBERT LIVINGSTON, 2nd (3d Generation in Amer.) who succeeded to the Manor as its last Lord. His children were:

- 1 - Peter Van Brugh, merchant of W. Y. C., who married Mary Alexander, sister of Lord Stirling
- 2 - Philip, signer of the Declaration of Independence
- 3 - John, also a merchant of New York
- 4 - William, Governor of New Jersey
- 5 - Sarah, wife of William Alexander, Lord Stirling

- 6 - Alida
- 7 - Catharine

Robert Livingston, 2nd (3d Gen.) was the first proprietor of Clermont. He was born Aug. 1715. In 1760 he became judge of the Admiralty Court; in 1763 justice of the New York Supreme Court. He also served in the Provincial Assembly and the Stamp Congress. He married Margaret, daughter of Colonel Henry Beckman (and here these de-

scendants become related to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States). His daughter Janet married Gen. Richard Montgomery, who died heroically at Quebec. His son:

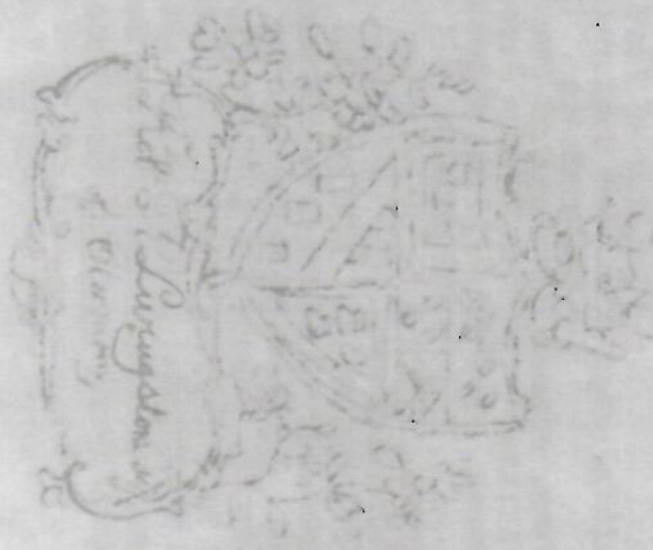
ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON 3d, (4th Generation of Livingston's in America). Born: Nov. 27, 1746 was minister to France and the first Chancellor of New York. There are several books and genealogies written about this gentleman, some can be found at the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society 122 East 25th Street, New York City. He died Feb. 26, 1813. He had two daughters:

- 1 -
- 2 - Catharine

ATHANAS LIVINGSTON married Claudine Terman

Unaccompany

Spencer M. 1804 - 9 info for the first



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MASONNEAU, ROBERT LIVINGSTON

Born: Oct. 3, 1825 in Red Hook, N. Y.
Died: March 14, 1898-9 " " "

Buried: Lutheran Cemetery " " "

Married: Oct. 27, 1839 Emma Clark Strobel
daughter of Rev. William Daniel
Strobel, D. D. and Abby Anna (Bugs)
Strobel and granddaughter of
Philip Vanton Bugs, a wine mer-
chant of New York City.

3rd Generation of MASONNEAU's in America

5 Children:

- 1 - Robert Livingston, Jr., M. Anna
Caroline Coe - 5 children
- 2 - William Strobel M. Katie Town-
send Walter Frey. 1 daught-
er, Elizabeth Drexel Mas-
sonneau (Cole).
- 3 - Eliza Franklin M. John Bunting -
no issue
- 4 - Edward Philip M. Caroline Branch
1 daughter - Carol Branch
Masonneau (Baldwin)
- 5 - Emma Bugs M. Paul du Breuil
Russell - no issue.

Robert Livingston Masonneau was a very honest, honorable gentleman of exceptionally fine character, an intelligent thinker and a prodigious reader (used to read Dickens through every year of his life.)

He was shy and reticent, sensitive, generous and tender hearted, a constant champion of the under-dog (contributing to the "Underground Railway" before the Civil War and aiding the slaves at every opportunity.) When a man would come around with a dancing bear on a hot summer day, he would give the owner of the bear a lib-
eral contribution and see to it that the bear

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was permitted to sit in the shade until it grew cooler, instead of performing for his pay. His wife would get provoked with him when he would give what seemed to her too large a coin to the organ grinder when he would play the "Marseillaise". In his youth he had spent much of his time with his grandfather, Claudius Germain Masonneau, who was a native of France, and he always loved to hear French stirring national anthems. He spoke French with his grandfather and from him learned to speak the language well.

His first business was in the Tobacco factory which his father helped to found. Later he was one of a committee appointed to handle details pertinent to the organization and founding of a banking institution at Red Hook; then as a member of the building committee for the construction of a permanent home for the fast growing FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF RED HOOK. This is the same site of that on which the bank building occupies today (1941). Robert Masonneau was named one of the directors of this bank and in turn became its President. His great grandson Robert Livingston Masonneau 3d, has a five dollar bill with his great grandfather's signature on it. This was an obligation which Presidents of Banks had to do at this time.

He would settle the estate of his friend for nothing and his son Robert could have had a scholarship to Hamilton College on his mark at De Grasse Institute, but the father wouldn't let him accept it, saying he could afford to pay his way while the parents of many another deserving boy might not be able to do so. He also expected to send his second son, William, through college, but the son was in love and anxious to get into business, so when there was an opening in the bookkeeping

bookkeeping department of the bank, he gave left school before graduation. His father gave him a handsome gold watch to make up some of the difference. To show that William was his honest father's honest son, he refused his diploma from De Garmo Institute, when it was offered to him a month or so before graduation, saying that he didn't want anything he hadn't earned.

Robert Nassonmean was a very clean minded man and if any one would make an out of remark or tell an off-color joke, he would stalk out of the room with a disgusted "HURPH!" His "HURPH!" became a family joke.

He slept very poorly and would go to bed early and look from his dark room out at the stars, so he knew quite a good deal about astronomy. He had a long lingering illness, in bed at least a year, before he died of locomotor ataxia. This illness depressed him greatly and he seemed to turn to the stars for comfort and solace. He was a much loved man and his younger daughter once said ~~seems~~ that her deep love for him was probably one of the most lasting emotional experiences of her life.

MARGARET, EMMA CLARK STROBEL, wife of Robert Robert Livingston Nassonmean

Born: Dec. 19, 1839 on Kott Street, New York City, which was then a very fashionable section of that city, but is not a part of Chinatown. She was named for her father's first wife, Emma Clark, who died without issue.

Died: Aug. 24, 1906 in Red Hook, N.Y.
Buried: Lutheran Cemetery "
Married: Oct. 27, 1859 Robert Liv-

ington Nassonmean in the Lutheran Church Red Hook, where her father was minister.

4th Generation of Strobel's in America

Emma Clark Strobel Nassonmean was a very fine woman and of great influence in the community in which she lived. She was a member of the women's Christian Temperance Union and the fact that her husband occasionally drank a little whiskey when he felt like it, rankled her no end, even though he never drank enough to become befuddled or cross or impatient.

The people who remember Mrs. Nassonmean say she was of a very noble character, graceful, sweet, religious, generous, patient and calm. She kept such a lovely home, and her younger daughter would so much prefer to eat meals at home, that when she was invited into someone's invitations elsewhere, she ~~would~~ would be sad throughout the meal (to the point of tears) and joyfully race back to her home and to her parents ~~as soon as she could~~.

She distained petty talk and gossip and made very few close friends in the town of Red Hook. She died at the age of 66 of heart trouble.