

COVERT ANCESTRY.

COMPILED BY
EDSON SALISBURY JONES.

CONTRIBUTED BY
BYRON BARNES HORTON, SHEFFIELD, PA.

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The first man in America, as far as yet seen, who bore a surname which was one of the many variants of the modern form, Covert, was Theunis Janssen, who came to the Province of New York in 1651, according to his oath of allegiance, taken in Sept., 1687.

When New Amsterdam was first settled, the surnames of the Dutch were patronymic. The patronymics of children were the Christian names of their fathers somewhat varied to denote the sons and daughters. As an example,—the sons of a Jan Pietersen (meaning Jan, son of Pieter) took the patronymic, Janse, Janssen or Janszen (meaning son of Jan); and the daughters properly took the form, Jans (meaning daughter of Jan). If Jan Pietersen had a son, Theunis, he took the name Theunis Janssen; and all the latter's sons took the patronymic Theunissen. Soon after arrival in New Amsterdam, men began to take what became true surnames. These were often the names of the towns or localities where they had formerly resided, with the prefix, van (meaning of or from),—as van Aarnhem (from Aarnhem, Province of Guelderland); sometimes Dutch words indicating occupations,—de Riemer (the saddler); or others expressing condition or characteristics,—as de Ryck (the rich man), and de Witt (the white one—of light complexion), etc., etc.

The derivation of the surname, Covert, seems to be uncertain; and four Dutchmen (familiar with the origin of names) have furnished no solution. Possibly it came from Coevorden, or Koevorde, a fortified town in the Province of Drenthe, Holland, 23 miles S. S. E. of Assen. This town-name form has not been seen in connection with Theunis', whose surname is variably recorded as Coevors, Coevers, Couverts, etc.; but has been seen in two instances connected with his alleged children. These are (a) in the record of marriage of Aeltje, where she appears as "Aeltje Theunis Van Couverden" (N. Y. Du. Ch. Rec.—N. Y. G. & B. Soc. Coll., 1890, p. 45); and (b) in Snell's Hist. of Hunterdon and Somerset Cos., N. J., p. 561, and Messler's Hist. of Somerset Co., p. 34, where the authors say that among the heads of families, who came from Long Island to New Jersey, was "Jan Hans Coeverden." The next nearest form is in the deed from "Abraham Coverd" to his brother "Isaac Coverd." In olden times, spelling was very variable. In such times, too, the wives of Dutchmen were usually spoken of and recorded by their maiden names.

Bergen's "Early Settlers of Kings Co., N. Y.," treats the Covert family the most extensively of any work seen. Of Theunis' and his family, he says:

COEVERS or COVERT. Teunis Janse emigrated in 1651, from Heemstede, in North Holland; m. Barbara Lucas or Jans; resided at first in New Amsterdam, and finally settled in Bedford in Booklyn, at which place he took oath of allegiance in 1687; member of Ref. Du. Ch. of New Amsterdam prior to 1660; member of Ref. Du. Ch. of Brooklyn in 1660, 1677 and 1685; and died prior to 1700. Issue:

Hans Teunise, m. Jannetje Boka (Bragow); oath of allegiance, 1687; on the Raritan, N. J., 1705.

Marretje Teunise, m. Nov. 24, 1682, Jean Messerole, Jr., of Bushwick.

Lucas Teunise (see under Lucas Covert and family).

Mauritz Teunise, bap. Aug. 6, 1663; m. April 1, 1690, Anne Fonteyn, widow of Jacob Jansen; oath of allegiance, 1687.

Aeltje Teunise, m. May 18, 1679, in New York, William Pos or Post of New York.

Sarah Teunise, m. April 7, 1680, in New York, Arent Frederickson of New York.

Annetje Teunise, bap. Aug. 18, 1661; m. April 16, 1687, Garrett Sprong.

Jannetje Teunise (supposed), m. Titus Syrach DeVries.

Aagrica or Eechtje, m. Derk Paulus of Jamaica.

Jahannes Teunise, m. Jannetje ———; oath of allegiance, 1687; settled on the Raritan, N. J.

THEUNIS' COVERT AND FAMILY.

Original authority that Theunis' came from Heemstede has not been seen, but it may be in the records of the N. Y. Dutch Church.

That he came to the Province of New York in 1651 is shown by his oath of allegiance. On the list of oaths taken Sept. 26-30, 1687, among the Brooklyn men was "theunis Janse Couverts, 36 Jeare" [36 years in Prov. of N. Y., 1687-36-1651]. (Doc. Hist. N. Y., I, p. 430.)

Among the members of the Ref. Du. Ch. of New York, before 1660 (as printed), appear:

"Theunis Janszen Coevers, en	} Vertrocken na } Breúckelen" }	(N. Y. G. & B. Rec., IX, p. 72.)
"Barbara Jans sÿn húÿsv"		

Among the members of the Ref. Du. Ch. of Brooklyn, on Sept. 12, 1660, appear:

"Teunis Janse, Barbar Lucas." (Holland Society Year-Book, 1897, p. 133.)

As "Barbara Jans," the wife appears but once; but as "Barbara Lucas," she is found several times on the Church Record. No marriage of Theunis' has been seen, and it seems uncertain, as yet, that these two women were identical.

Some Theunis Jansen was assessed in Brooklyn in 1675. (Doc. Hist. N. Y., IV, p. 93.)

Some Theunis Jansen was assessed in Brooklyn in 1676. (Doc. Hist. N. Y., II, p. 275.)

Some Teunis Jansen was assessed in Brooklyn in 1683. (Doc. Hist. N. Y., II, p. 290.)

The latest appearance of Theunis with wife that has been seen was March 29, 1691, when "Theunis Janszen Coúvors" and "Barbara Lucas" witnessed bap. of Theunis, son of Maúritz Coúvors and Anneken Fonteýn, in N. Y. Du. Ch. (N. Y. G. & B. Soc. Coll., 1901, p. 202). The last appearance of Theunis was March 13, 1692, as "Teunis Jansen Coevers," a witness to bap. of Jan, son of Dirck Poulusseen and Sara Jeets, in Brooklyn Du. Ch. (Hol. Soc. Year-Book, 1897, p. 164). Dec. 27, 1696, "Barbar Coevors" witnessed a bap. in Brooklyn Du. Ch. (id., p. 171); but it is uncertain whether she were wife of Theunis¹ or of Lucas.

HANS (Theunis¹). In dealing separately with this son, Bergen calls him Hans or Jan; and the last child of Theunis¹, named by Bergen, is "Johannes." For the following reasons, the "Hans" and "Johannes" of Bergen would seem to be identical:

(a) Hans and Jan were both diminutives of Johannes, all three names being often used for the same man.

(b) "Jan Couverts, native" (born in Prov. of N. Y.), took oath of allegiance in 1687. (Doc. Hist. N. Y., I, p. 430.) No Hans Couvert did so.

(c) Bergen gives "Hans" and "Jan" wives having the same Christian name. (No marriage of Hans or Jan has been seen.)

(d) In deeds by the text of which "Hans" was grantor, the deeds are signed "Jan."

(e) The three children bap. in Brooklyn and New York (two of "Hans" and one of "Jan") are found in the will of "Jan Koevers," of Millstone, N. J. No will of "Hans" has been found, or any administration on his estate.

It would seem that the wife of this Hans or Jan was Jannetje, dau. of Bragoon Braghar (or Bourgen Broecord, or Broeckaert). Before the removal to New Jersey, two of the issue of this couple were bap. in Brooklyn and one in New York, as follows:

Bap. Aug. 3, 1690, Ariaentje, dau. of Hans Teunissen Coevers and Jannetje Boka. (Hol. Soc. Year-Book, 1897.)

Bap. April 16, 1693, Theunis, son of Jan Coeverts and Jannetje Broeckaert. (N. Y. G. & B. S. Coll., 1901.)

Bap. March 29, 1696, Bragon, son of Hans Coevers and Jannetje Coevers. (Hol. Soc. Year-Book, 1897.)

Bergen gives "Johannes" a son, Teunis, bap. in New York, April 11, 1693; but only the bap. of Theunis, on April 16, has been seen.

Some Jan Teunissen was assessed in Brooklyn in 1683. (Doc. Hist. N. Y., II, p. 292.) No assessment of "Hans" has been found.

June 21, 1690, Hans Tunis Covert and Bourgen Broecord, both of Bedford, Kings Co., N. Y., bought land in Newtown, Queens Co., N. Y. (Queens Co. Deeds, B. II, p. 353.)

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Jan. 26, 1695/6, Johannes Covert and John Miserole, Jr., of Kings Co., bought a corn mill and meadow. (Kings Co. Deeds, II, p. 238.)

Feb. 4, 1698/9, Johannes Covart, of Newtown, Queens Co., sold said mill and meadow. Signed, "John Covert." (Kings Co. Deeds, II, p. 238.)

Feb. 21, 1700/1, John Covers and wife, Jane, of Newtown, sell land there. Signed, "Jan Coevers, Jantie Coevers." (Queens Co. Deeds, B. II, p. 319.)

May 9, 1702, John Coverson and Bragoon Braghar, of Somerset Co., N. J., planters, bought 2,000 acres at the mouth of Millstone River, N. J. (E. J. Deeds, C. II, p. 447.)

March 13, 1706/7, Jno. Covers, of Millstone River, N. J., confirmed his sale of Feb. 21, 1700/1. Signed, "Jan Coevers." (Queens Co. Deeds, B. II, p. 324.)

March 15, 1706/7, Hans Coverd and Andrew Bird, Jr., of Millstone River, N. J., and Isaac Bourga, of Newtown, N. Y., sold Newtown land. Signed, "Jan Coevers." (Queens Co. Deeds, B. II, p. 318.)

Will of "Jan Kuvers," of Millstone, Somerset Co., N. J., yeoman, stricken in years, dated May 2, 1719, and pr. April 13, 1723, names wife Jane; sons, Tunis (eldest), Bergon and Lucas (youngest); and daus., Catherine Bird, Orianchy Courser (bap. "Ariaentje"), Jane, Marry and Bathseba. Signed, "Jan koevers." (East Jersey Wills, A., p. 244, and original will.)

Rev. E. T. Corwin's "Historical Discourse on the Occasion of the Centennial Anniversary of the Reformed Dutch Church of Millstone" (N. J.) refers to the purchase of the 2,000 acres on the banks of Millstone River by "John Covers and John Brocars" (p. 25).

Snell (p. 561) and Messler (p. 35) refer to "Johanes Coevert" as living near New Brunswick early in the eighteenth century. The mouth of the Millstone is about 6 miles from New Brunswick. Snell (p. 818) says that among the subscribers to ministerial fund for church at Three Mile Run, N. J., in 1703, were Lucas Coevert and Brogun Coevert. The only Brogun (Bragon or Bergon) Coevert seen was the one bap. March 29, 1696, who would have been but seven years old in 1703. If the year of this subscription be correct, it would seem that the subscription of "Brogun" was in his name, he being then a child; and that of Lucas may have been in his name as a child—as Jan's will shows sons of these names. But, if Lucas were adult, then he would seem to have been the man that Bergen makes Lucas¹ (Theunis¹). If so, he most likely subscribed as a resident of Madnan's Neck, and possibly while visiting at Millstone River. (See under Lucas and Family.) It seems more probable, however, that the year was about 1723, when Lucas and Bragon, sons of Jan, would have been adults. Had the year been 1703, it would have been most natural for Jan himself to subscribe, but in 1723 he was dead.

MARRETJE. Some "Marritje," dau. of a Theunis Jansen (mother's name not given), was bap. April 20, 1653, in the N. Y. Du. Ch. (N. Y. G. & B. Soc. Coll., 1901.)