A Tribute to Harry Macy, Jr.

The Family of Assuerus Hendricks, Silversmith, of New York City

Bibliography of Harry Macy, Jr., FASG, FGBS

William J. Hoffman, FASG, FGBS

Reconsidering John Ogden of Rye

Elijah and Nancy (Burger) Bowman of Pennsylvania and New York

Con Spirito: Violinist Giuseppe De Grazia, 1855–1937, of Marsicovetere, Italy, and New York City

Some Newly Discovered German Origins of New York’s Later-Arriving Palatines
The Dutch-American scholar William J. Hoffman (born Willem Johan Hoffman) made an enduring contribution to New Netherland genealogy with his brilliant writings on the continental origins of early New York families. When a collection of most of William J. Hoffman’s writings in English appeared in 2010, few details of his early life were readily available.1 An obituary by Arthur Adams notes:

He was born in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, April 21, 1882, a son of Jan Jacob Hoffman and Mathilde Petronella Hermanna Schadee. Educated as a mechanical engineer at the Technical University in Delft, the Netherlands, he was graduated in 1909 and came to the United States in the same year.2 This information agrees with his passport application, which gives the date of his arrival in the United States as 14 August 1909.3 Hoffman himself published accounts of his own family containing autobiographical material, but both are exceptionally rare and have contributed little to the shaping of his scholarly persona, so discussion of these is deferred for later.4 This article considers the reception of Hoffman’s work and attempts a closer examination of his biography in order to correct some mistaken assumptions about its nature and motivation.

Hoffman, who was 27 years of age on his arrival in the United States, worked as an engineer with various firms, then from 1946 to 1954 was an instructor in
the Faculty of Engineering at Keystone Junior College (since 1995, Keystone College) at La Plume, Pennsylvania. For a long time Hoffman's genealogical activities remained almost unknown to American genealogists, as it was almost certainly not until 1932 that he first published in English. But from then until 1954, the year before his death, he produced about sixty-one journal articles, many of them groundbreaking. These have led to the assessment, with which the present author fully concurs, that Hoffman "had a knowledge of Dutch sources and families unmatched by any American genealogist." But they have also contributed to an inaccurate perception of Hoffman as a late bloomer whose research lacked a personal motive. This misapprehension is evident in a review of the collected edition of the Armory, which avers that after leaving the Netherlands, "in New York, he developed a passion for genealogy and heraldry." And although American scholars have evinced some awareness of Hoffman's longstanding connection with the Dutch genealogical journal De Nederlandsche Leemv, if they have had occasion to cite his work, it was usually the brief notices designed to elicit information for his researches on New Netherland families; and these notices, when successful, led to publication of the results in English, in the pages of the present journal or of The American Genealogist. But Hoffman's formative period as a genealogist began long before his emergence as an expert on the settlement of New Netherland; and as with most genealogists it started with the investigation of his own family.

In 1904, fully five years before he left for the United States, Hoffman became a frequent participant in the notes-and-queries department of De Nederlandsche Leeuw. In 1907, as "W. J. Hoffman J. Jzn., 2 Oude Delft, Delft" (with a bar over the n in Hoffman), he is listed as a new member of the sponsoring society. Until 1932, when he Americanized his name to William J. Hoffman, he adorned the final letter of his German-derived surname with a macron to symbolize the loss of the second n, which occurred after his family's move to the Netherlands—a quirk that was likely a nuisance to printers and often resulted in misaligned or smeared presswork—and added "J. Jzn." after his name to stand for "son of Jan Jacobszen." His earliest notes and articles almost all relate to the Hoffman family and its connections, on which he produced four substantial articles on the paternal line alone between 1910 and 1915.


6 This perception has persisted despite his occasional references to his own descents from families he studied, which will be discussed below.


8 De Nederlandsche Leeuw 25 (1907): col. 1.

following years brought a world war, his marriage (in 1924), and the publication of his massive two-volume Hoffman genealogy. Hoffman published nothing else of importance until 1929 and 1930, when he put his facility with the English language to good use in studies of the families of two ancestral career soldiers who settled in the Netherlands in the late-sixteenth century during the Revolt against Spain: Bowier of Staffordshire, and Chatfield of Sussex. Hoffman's contributions to *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* continued through 1939, but steadily lessened in importance after 1932, when he began publishing in English, as seen in the pages of the present journal and in the thirty-six articles for the *Armory*, his best-known and most characteristic work. Only a year after the first of these articles appeared he was invited to join the The NYG&B Society's Publication Committee, on which he continued to serve until 1941. In 1942 he was elected a fellow of the American Society of Genealogists.

Hoffman’s family was decidedly aristocratic, and its wealth and connections furnished ample opportunity—and material—for genealogical and heraldic investigations. His great-great-great grandfather, a German named Johann Friedrich Hoffman, came to Rotterdam and established the family’s fortune with the iron-manufacturing firm of Johan Frederic Hoffman & Zon. William’s father, Jan Jacob Hoffman, a second surviving son, became a partner in the sugar brokerage of J. H. Hoogewerf & Zonen. At the time of Hoffman’s birth, his father’s first cousin, Cecilia Johanna van Hangest d’Yvoy, was Lady-in-Waiting to Princess Marie, widow of Prince Henrik of the Netherlands. This Cecilia’s sister, Constance, married Mr. Jacob Derk Carel baron van Heeckeren van Kell, and they were the parents of Willem baron van Heeckeren van Kell, the “cousin” who served as best man at Hoffman’s wedding. Hoffman could himself claim numerous noble and royal descents, though with characteristic modesty he relegated discussion of such matters to writings not intended for

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10 To Kathryn Teresa Marguerite Cary, without resulting issue. See note 18.

11 W. J. Hoffman, “Een onderzoek naar de Engelsche afstammung der familie Bowier,” *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* 47 (1929): 355–63. Hoffman’s descent from this family, which is not mentioned in the article, is given in his *Geschiedenis van de familie Hoffman uit Hachenburg* (note 4), 2:208–9, 211 (this last page containing the ancestor table of Hoffman’s mother).

12 W. J. Hoffman, “De oudere generaties van het geslacht Chatvelt,” *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* 48 (1930): cols. 9–12, with a brief follow-up in 1933 (“Chatvelt,” *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* 51 [1933]: cols. 332–33). Hoffman’s descent from this family, which is not mentioned in the article, is given in his *Geschiedenis van de familie Hoffman uit Hachenburg* (note 4), 2:211 (ancestor table of his mother). Thus, in John Blythe Dobson, “Note on the family of Thomas Chatfield, Great-Uncle of the Three Chatfield Brothers of Connecticut, and Probable Father-in-law of Johannes Verveelen of New Amsterdam,” *The Genealogist* 22 (2008): 212–20, the speculation on p. 214 as to whether Hoffman could have been aware of the Verveelen connection is now moot in light of his obvious personal interest in publishing the article.

13 Adams (note 2) wrote in 1955, “This series alone assures for him a permanent place among the distinguished genealogists and heraldic scholars of the United States and Holland.” Although Hoffman is best known for his writings in English, particularly the *Armory*, it is only fair to add that his influence is still felt in Dutch writing on genealogy and heraldry.


15 Hoffman appears as member no. 27, elected in 1942, on the ASG website (fasg.org/fellows/all-fellows).

16 See notes 4 and 9 for statements in this paragraph not otherwise referenced.

the public.19 Indeed, in his prodigious journalistic output in English, the writer recalls only three occasions on which Hoffman mentions his own ancestry, noting his descendents from the families of De Riemer,20 Bertholff,21 and Hudde.22 These descents do not exhaust his connections with ancestors of New Netherlanders, connections that presumably influenced his intensive researches in that direction. In particular, Hoffman, who had been baptized in the French Protestant church and was descended from such great Protestant dynasties as Van der Meulen, Della Faille, and Malapert,23 brought to bear in his work on the Armory extensive knowledge of refugee lineages and their migration patterns.

Hoffman's two-volume history of his family, justly described in the review in THE RECORD as "elaborate and beautifully presented," is not merely a worthy tribute to an interesting ancestry, but a demonstration of the traits that would make his later work so important: a sound knowledge of history and geography, skill in several languages, vast reading, fine powers of reasoning, and astonishing attention to detail. And his unrelenting curiosity led him to return again and again to questions not fully answered in the book. For example, some lingering gaps in the ancestry of the Hochepied family24 were filled several years later in a clever manner by detecting the similarities in two long-forgotten articles that had been almost entirely obfuscated by divergent spellings.25 Even in his

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20 "Notes on Old Dutch-American Families—De Riemer Groovenraat notes," RECORD 63 (1932): 4–10, in which Hoffman writes: "Due to the fact that I have a stain of the Dutch de Riemer family blood in my own veins, a personal interest was added to the purely genealogical one." No mention of the name De Riemer has been found in Hoffman, Geschiedenis van de familie Hoffman uit Haarlenburg (note 4), and the connection is notknown.


22 "An Armory of American Families of Dutch Descent—Hudde," RECORD 69 (1938): 128–37, at p. 131, where it is stated that Jan ten Grotenhuis, of Portugal, merchant, and his wife Reimerich Hudde, who were married in 1565, were "ancestors of the author of this article." This was through their daughter Trijn vanad, ten Grotenhuijse, wife of Jan Pompemaker, who appear in Hoffman, Geschiedenis van de familie Hoffman uit Haarlenburg (note 4), 2258, though by design the account therein does not extend far enough back to show Trijn's parentage. The connection is however supplied in an editorial note in Het oudste aantehouden register van de Kamer Amsterdam der Oost-Luidische Compagnie, ed. J. G. van Dillen (S-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958), 249. The relationship between Hoffman and the New Netherland immigrant, Andries Hudde, is somewhat distant, as it runs through brothers who were born about 1500.

23 Hoffman, Geschiedenis van de familie Hoffman uit Haarlenburg (note 4), 2233, 258.

24 Hoffman, Geschiedenis van de familie Hoffman uit Haarlenburg (note 4), 2258.

briefest writings, Hoffman often solved, or at least elucidated, longstanding problems simply by noticing patterns in the data that others had missed.

But the appeal of Hoffman’s work is not due solely to its technical brilliance, a trait shared by that of many of his Dutch contemporaries. The American journals that provided Hoffman with a platform for his writing understood that their readers wanted not just the polished results of investigation, but instruction on how to do it for themselves and reassurance that this was indeed possible. Hoffman was able to meet these demands with considerable powers of exposition and a contagious passion for his subject. His writings have been a great stimulus to subsequent research.26

Despite the high regard in which he was held by his contemporaries, and the resulting recognition, Hoffman seems to have been a very private person. Though his two-volume family history includes a two-page autobiographical sketch, it is factual and devoid of self-indulgence, simply adhering to the format established throughout the book. The work contains a photograph of Hoffman’s mother and four of Hoffman’s father but none of Hoffman himself, and indeed the only photograph of Hoffman known to the present writer is the one on his passport.27 Not only was Hoffman disinclined to self-revelation, but there are certain matters over which it seems he would gladly have pulled a veil if he could. The elaborate pedigree chart he published of his family in 1910 is perplexing, as it shows his father marrying for a second time in 1891, while Hoffman’s mother was ostensibly still alive (barring a misprint in the dates).28 Perhaps realizing afterwards that this presentation made his father appear to be a bigamist, in 1911 he published an article that showed his parents as having been divorced in 1886.29 In 1926 Hoffman permitted his name to be associated with an account of his family in a special issue of Nederland’s Patriciunl devoted to the prominent families of Rotterdam, which stated that his parents were divorced on 16 June 1886.30 (The official record gives the date as 10 July 1886,31 but in any case it was surely in the spring or summer of 1886.) In the second volume of his own magnum opus on the family, published in 1928, the otherwise compulsively precise Hoffman supplies only a bare year of 1886 for the divorce, but finally produces the additional revelation that his mother was likewise remarried afterwards, supposedly also in 1886. In reality the two events were not quite so close together as he believed (or perhaps feared): in 1928, with his mother and her second husband both dead, Hoffman apparently had to guess at the date of their Parisian marriage, which could not have occurred before the publication of the banns on 20

27 William John Hoffman passport application (note 3).
30 “Hoffman,” Nederland’s Patrijsanl 16 (1926) (=Rotterdamsche Geslachten II), 176–85, at p. 183. The last page of the account contains a statement that it was endorsed by Hoffman, but it was not necessarily prepared at his instigation.
31 Divorce of Jan Jacob Hoffman and Mathilda Petronella Hermanna Schadee, Rotterdam Burgerlijke Stand vanaf 1811 [Rotterdam, civil registrations since 1811], Echtscheiding [Divorces], Rotterdam 1886 s2-020, akte nr. 30; abstract available online at rotterdam.digitalestamboom.nl/.
March 1887. 32 But by any measure it was a precipitous remarriage, which could hardly have escaped being the subject of speculation and scandal.

Besides revealing a certain reticence, or at least ambivalence, in Hoffman’s reportage of the events, these facts tell an unhappy story. Hoffman was the only child his parents had together, and their marriage was dissolved shortly after his fourth birthday. His mother’s second marriage produced another healthy child, followed by two more children, who did not survive infancy, and she died in 1898 before Hoffman had reached the age of 17. 33 Precisely what effect these losses had on Hoffman, it seems futile to speculate. Fortunately he was possessed of an extraordinary work ethic and transcended these difficulties to become one of the greatest genealogists of his generation.

Alas, no consideration of Hoffman would be complete without some mention of his connection with his contemporary and fellow countryman Louis P. de Boer (1881–1964). 34 De Boer was a self-proclaimed expert in continental genealogy, and his linguistic skills, particularly in his native Dutch, aided in recommending his writings to the uninitiated. In the United States, few if any journal editors of that era were equipped to evaluate such work, which would eventually prove in many cases to be not merely incompetent, but plagiaristic or even fraudulent. 35 And de Boer must have been highly personable and persuasive, to judge from the numerous surviving testimonials from satisfied clients. Whether or not he was responsible for the confusion, his admirers have left seriously conflicting accounts of his life. One says he “had come to America . . . to become Chief of the Manuscripts and Special Collections of the New York State Library . . . at Albany” just after the “tragic fire” of 1911. 36 Another claims he “fled to this country during the first World War.” 37 Neither of these stories can possibly be true, as de Boer in fact arrived from Rotterdam on 27 July 1909. 38 But he soon insinuated himself, as it would seem, into every organization on which he set his sights. He was sufficiently identified with the Holland Society of New York that in 1912 it was reported (probably incorrectly) that he was its librarian. 39 Between 1914 and 1930, he had eight articles accepted

33 W. J. Hoffman, Geschiedenis van de familie Hoffman uit Haarlemburg (note 4), 214.
34 His name was originally Lolle Piers de Boer; he is so called in his immigration record (note 38 below) and on his tombstone (Memorial no. 10,228,760, digital image, Find A Grave [www.findagrave.com]). There is an extensive collection of his personal papers and memorabilia in the Frisian Historical and Literary Centre Leeuwarden, Friesland, a part of which has been digitized at collections.tresoar.nl (indexed as “Boer, Louis P. de”). He was born 21 Dec. 1881 in Makkum, Friesland, died 6 Nov. 1964 in Los Angeles, and is buried in Artesia Cemetery, Cerritos, Los Angeles Co., Calif. The reference to him in RECORD 90 (1959): 65 as “the late Louis P. de Boer” is thus somewhat premature.
35 This is not to suggest that all of De Boer’s work is flawed, stolen, or spurious; but it is so riddled with problems that it must only be used with the greatest of caution.
39 De Boer is identified as librarian of the Holland Society in RECORD 43 (1912): 288. The Holland Society’s own Year Book of that era does not vouch for such a connection, though an investigation by the
for publication in *THE RECORD.* By 1921 he had been appointed general agent in the U.S. for the committee formed to build a church at Delfshaven in commemoration of the tercentenary of the departure of the Pilgrims. Soon after, he was made a Corresponding Member of the Genealogical Society of New Jersey, which between 1925 and 1929 published a series of nineteen articles by him under the general title "Pre-American Notes on Old New Netherland Families" in its organ *The Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey.*

At a time when de Boer's fictions were still being widely quoted with approval, the influence of Hoffman may have been instrumental in bringing de Boer's career in journalistic publishing to an end. When Hoffman joined the NYG&B Society's Publication Committee in 1933, the editor who had accepted most of de Boer's submissions, John Reynolds Totten, was still in office. To his credit Totten, on learning how he had been imposed upon, confronted de Boer and published a remarkably frank disclosure of the matter in which he stated that de Boer "recognizes and admits the errors in his article." De Boer was evidently *persona non grata* with the journal from the time of that encounter. But given Hoffman's area of expertise, he could not avoid frequent clashes with de Boer's errors. At first he handled criticism of de Boer's productions with great tact and without mentioning their author by name, leaving it to the curious reader to look up the references. He preserved such decorum even in 1935, when he was forced to point out that a 1927 article by de Boer in the *Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey* was a "translated" (and in fact an unauthorized and unacknowledged) rearrangement of an article that had appeared in 1890 in *De Nederlandsche Lezen,* and in 1939, when he had to issue a warning that a manuscript (which he avoided stating was by de Boer) in the


**Note:** The author's name is not available. This is due to the nature of the text and the presence of the William J. Hoffman, *FASG, FGBS*
NYG&B Society library contained a fictitious marriage record. Finally, in 1954, after two decades of issuing gentle reprimands without effect, a doubtless weary Hoffman concluded, “It is to be regretted that Mr. de Boer’s reputation for accuracy is distinctly a negative one, as I have been able to prove in several articles,” and he added a note supplying pertinent citations. De Boer is now scarcely remembered except as an irritant to better scholars than himself, but perhaps Hoffman’s fervid productivity owed a little to the competition between them.

Hoffman’s writings are a lasting contribution to both Dutch and Dutch American genealogical literature. The belated publication in 2010 of a collected edition of the Armory, which gathers together in a convenient form about half of Hoffman’s production in English, has made more evident the considerable scope of his achievement. After sixty years his work continues to repay repeated study, not only for its sound methodology and skillful reasoning, but as a model of the application of broad historical and cultural knowledge to genealogical questions.

47 William J. Hoffman, “Storm,” RECORD 70 (1939): 153. One has to read Hoffman’s follow-up to this fifteen years later (note 48) to learn that the culprit was de Boer. For further commentary on this case see Harry Macy, “Sara (De Planck) Montfort,” RECORD 122 (1991): 143-49, esp. p. 147n.7.


49 Besides the evidence of Hoffman’s refutations of de Boer’s work, this view is suggested by the fact that de Boer likewise became a frequent participant in the notes-and-queries department of De Nederlandsche Levens, where he contributed little of substance, but constantly trolled for leads on the origins of New Netherland families and parlayed the results into his private genealogical practice. Such behavior was the antithesis of Hoffman’s and must surely have been irksome.

50 William J. Hoffman, An Armory of American Families of Dutch Descent, ed. Francis J. Sypher, Jr. (note 1). Fortunately this collected edition includes the important article “Notes on Arms of Families of Dutch Descent,” New England Genealogical and Historical Register 106 (1952): 4-14, which was specifically designed to complement the articles in THE RECORD that appeared between 1933 and 1941. If the reference in the first page of this article to there being “no prospect of this series being continued” alludes to some disaffection with the NYG&B Society, this must have passed by the time Hoffman contributed his last article to volume 85 of THE RECORD in 1954. In any case, by 1952 a reprint of the series had already been assembled and copies distributed to several libraries though, as noted by Sypher, this reprint was never published. Harry Macy explains that the reason was World War II and its aftermath. “In the basement of the old NYG&B building there were shelves filled with reprint papers of this and other RECORD series that were waiting to be bound (among them a volume of the New York Dutch Church membership records and the records of Trinity Church). During and after the war the Society had some lean years where the size of THE RECORD was reduced and nothing else was published. By the time finances improved there apparently was no one around who thought it was worthwhile to revive these old projects.” (Harry Macy to the author, email, 12 July 2014).