

Juriae Westvaal (Westfall)

Dutch Farmer and Settler of Seventeenth-Century New Netherland

© Susan McNelley



"The Fall of New Amsterdam, 1664," an oil painting by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris (1863-1930); Wiki PD. Peter Stuyvesant, last Director-General of New Netherland, is the man in the painting with the wooden leg. In the late 1650s/early 1660s, Juriae Westvaal leased or rented farmland at Esopus from the Director-General.

Juriae Westvaal was a young man who emigrated from Holland to America, to what was then New Netherland in 1642. On the frontier of what is now New York, he settled down and carved out a life for himself and his family. He was one of the first settlers at Esopus (Kingston, NY). His children would be among the first to establish homesteads in Minisink, New York, a small town about 14 miles from Port Jervis and 60 miles northwest of Manhattan, New York City. The following is a sketch of his life, as revealed in various public and church records of New Netherland and New York. The well-researched and documented article by Holdridge Ozro Collins on "The Westfall Family" which appeared in 1902 in *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* was also used in the preparation of this story.

In the seventeenth-century records, the surname is spelled in numerous ways, including Westphalen, Van Westphalen, Westvaal, Westval, Westvael, Westfaal, Westpaal, Westphaal, Weesphael, Westphale, and Westphael. In the *Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts*, the name is also spelled Bestvaell, Bestivall, and Weestmael. Even Juriae's Christian name is spelled in a variety of ways. Standard spellings were not common in those days. Many people were illiterate or barely literate. Names were spelled phonetically. After a couple of generations in America, the name evolved to Westfall.

On the 6th of June, 1642, "Juriae Bestvael" (Juriae Westvaal) sailed from Holland on the ship *den Houttuyn*. He arrived at Rensselaerswyck in New Netherland on August 11 of that year. Westvaal was "van Luijderdorp," that is, from Leiderdorp, a town near the city of Leiden in the province of South Holland. Westvaal's passage across the Atlantic was paid by Kiliaen Van

Rensselaer who brought Westvaal and other "farm servants" from Holland to farm the lands of his estate. Westvaal began drawing wages at the Manor of Rensselaerswyck two days after his arrival, on August 13, 1642. In a document of July of 1644, he is referred to as a servant of Michiel Jansz. Juriaen Westvaal continued to work as a farmer on the estate of van Rensselaer for about a dozen years. (Collins 11; *Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts* 609, 827)

Rensselaerswyck was an estate encompassing what is now the Capital District of New York State, that is, the region in upstate New York surrounding Albany, the State Capital. The Dutch patroonship, similar to an English manor, extended for miles on both sides of the Hudson River. In 1630, the land had been deeded by the Dutch West India Company to Kiliaen van Rensselaer, a pearl and diamond merchant of Amsterdam. Van Rensselaer was also one of the original directors of the West India Company. (*Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts*; Manor of Rensselaerswyck)

On January 14, 1649 Westvaal and another man took over the lease of a farm on Papscaene Island and on October 8, 1651, Westphael became solely responsible for the property. (There is now a Nature Preserve on Papscaene Island.) In a document reporting on the status of the estate submitted to Kiliaen van Rensselaer in 1651, the farm of "Jurien Weestmael" was described as "one of the best." It was comprised of 28 morgans of land. (A morgen is a little over 2 acres.) Livestock included 10 horses and five cows. According to this report, the farm should bring f560 Guilders in rent. The document noted that Juriaen had never paid the rent, although he gave tithes of f42. (*Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts*, 741, 827)

Eventually some of the men on the Van Rensselaer estate grew restless and decided to seek their fortunes elsewhere. In 1652, Thomas Chambers, an Englishman by birth, became the first European to settle at Esopus, a pretty spot on the Hudson River, halfway between the Manor of Rensselaerswyck and New Amsterdam (the capital of New Netherland, located on the Island of Manhattan). Sometime between 1652 and 1654, Juriaen Westvaal joined Thomas Chambers and a few other residents of Rensselaerswyck in their move to Esopus. Evert Pels, a beer brewer who had immigrated to America with Westvaal, was another man who left Rensselaerswyck for the new settlement. (*Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts*; *Dutch records of Kingston*, Collins 12)

On August 29, 1654, Juriaen Westphael received a grant of land at Esopus of 32 1/2 morgens. At some point, Juriaen Westvaal entered into a contract for property rental or lease with Peter Stuyvesant, the Governor and Director-General of New Netherland. Perhaps it was to provide foodstuffs for the soldiers or for the colony in general. In the winter of 1658-59, Westphael fenced Stuyvesant's land, got the oats planted, but "the seed wheat came too late." Jurian Bestval requested some more cows, a dwelling house and a farm hand. (Van Buren, 130)

In a report dated May 24, 1659, Sergeant Louwrensen of Esopus wrote to Governor Stuyvesant that "George Westphal does his best to plough the land and fence it. I have lent him 69 pounds of bacon, as he needed provisions. The oats are in the ground, all which your Honor has sent, the spring wheat came too late and the land is fenced nearly all the way round, the ploughing continues since your Honor has sent the oxen. The oxen, in which your Honor is privately interested, draw well. He has sold his cows by order of your Honor. I have delivered the iron and ropes which your Honor has sent." On May 12, 1660, it was reported that "Jurryaen Westphalen,

your Honor's farmer, has in the ground 100 schepels of spring-wheat and barley, as well as peas and oats." (Collins 13-14)

On November 12, 1661, an ordinance was passed at Esopus imposing a land tax to defray the cost of building a house for the minister. At the top of the tax list was Jurriaen Westvael. He was assessed as a tenant of Balthasaer Lasar Stuyvesant's "bouwery" (farm), containing 25 morgens. Peter Stuyvesant, the Director-General of New Netherland, had a son named Balthasar. The property was presumably in his name. Jurriaen Westvael was also assessed for his own lands containing 28 morgens. (O'Callaghan 413-414)

In 1661, the settlement at Esopus became an official village under the command of Governor Peter Stuyvesant. He gave the village the name of Wildwyck (Wiltwyck). One source notes that "Esopus was generally a name for the large and indefinite tract of country in which Wildwyck, now Kingston, was situated. Later, the city of Kingston itself was commonly referred to as Esopus. (*Baptism and Marriage Records of the Old Dutch Church of Kingston* 499)

At the time of the building of the stockade at Wildwyck in 1658, the population of that settlement and the nearby "Nieu Dorp" (now Hurley), was 60-70, including "30 fighting men" (Van Buren 130). In 1662, in a survey of the village of Wildwyck, "Juriaen Westphael" was listed as the owner of lot 24 (Collins 88).

The Esopus Wars of the 17th century were localized conflicts between the indigenous Esopus tribe and the colonists who had settled at Wildwyck. They were fueled by cultural clashes and misunderstandings, as well "fearful intoxications" of the natives. On June 5, 1663, Esopus warriors attacked the Dutch settlements. Some of the Dutch were murdered. Women and children were taken hostage. Homes were destroyed. In an effort to keep villagers safe, an ordinance was issued from the fort on August 4 of that year requiring that "no one without permission and a proper convoy should venture out to mow, cart, or do any other work." A couple of months later, Juriaen Westphael was among those who were fined for ignoring the order; he had sent a man out alone to work his fields. (*Dutch records of Kingston*, 112)

Jurriaen Westvaal's name is found a number of times in the court records of Kingston recorded between May 31, 1658 and November 18, 1664. Complaints brought against him included failure to repay debts and failure to fulfill contract obligations. (*Dutch records of Kingston*) It should be of no surprise that Westvaal was sometimes unable to meet his contractual agreements. This was life on the frontier. Virgin land had to be cleared before it could be planted, an arduous and time-consuming task. As mentioned above, farmers had to contend with frequent conflict with the natives. These conflicts undoubtedly disrupted the business of everyday life. Farmers were also subject to the vagaries of Mother Nature, then as now.

In the ordinary session of the court, held on Tuesday, May 2, 1662, "Jan Lammersen, plaintiff, demands from Juriaen Westphalen payment of the amount of sixteen scheples of wheat, according to obligation, and procuration received from Volckje Juriaens. Defendant admits the debt, says he is at present unable to pay, requests time, and offers to pay proper interest . . . next fall" (*Dutch records of Kingston*, 32).

On April 1, 1664, Juriaen Westphael appeared before the court to acknowledge and declare that he was indebted to a Mr. Nicolaes de Meyer, citizen of the city of New Amsterdam for “the quantity of eighty schepels of good and pure winter wheat, twenty-eight schepels of oats, and six good whole merchantable beavers, together with thirty-three guilders, three stivers, in seewan, due for merchandise and goods delivered, with ten percent per annum interest thereon from July 9, 1663 to final payment.” Westphael promised to pay the debt in two installments, the first in 1664 and the second in 1665, to be delivered to New Amsterdam. For the purpose of carrying out these payments, Westphael mortgaged his land “situated below the village of Wildwyck, between the land of Thomas Chambers, across the Great Kill, and the land of Aert Martensen Doorn and the lot lying in Wildwyck near the lot of Albert Heymans Roose, on the one side, and next to the lot of Tjerck Claesen de Wit, on the other side,” and also in general [he mortgages] his person and estate, real and personal, present and future, nothing excepted.” (*Dutch records of Kingston*, 140-41).

As noted earlier in this story, Juriaen Westphael had leased land from Governor Peter Stuyvesant. In a court session, dated Tuesday, November 18, 1664, the “Honorable Mr. Petrus Stuyvesant, plaintiff” demanded from Juriaen Westphael, “pursuant to settlement of August 14 [1663] fifteen hundred and sixty-five guilders, six stivers, in grain, beaver’s value and requests payment of the amount of eleven hundred and sixty-five guilders, six stivers.” (*Dutch records of Kingston*, 169-170)

On August 17, 1659, Juriaen Westvaal and twelve other residents of Esopus petitioned the Director-General and the Council of New Netherland for the establishment of a church in their community. Westvaal, unable to write his name, signed with his mark, a "curious imitation of a three-pronged fork or trident." The men's wish was granted and the Reverend Harmanus Bloem was installed as Esopus' first regular minister "with a salary of seven hundred guilders in corn at beaver valuation." (Collins 87)

The records of the Old Dutch Church of Kingston begin in 1641. "Jurian Westvaal" and "Marretjen Hansen" first appear in the records on April 18, 1661, when they are listed as sponsors for the baptism of Jan, child of Gerret Jansen van Campen and Machtelt Stoffels. They are also listed as the parents of three children baptized there between 1661 and 1665. More details on these baptisms are given at the end of this story.

It isn’t known when Juriaen married Marretje Hansen. However, it appears that the marriage took place shortly after Juriaen’s move to Esopus about 1654. This was years before the establishment of the church at Esopus. Their first three children were also born before baptism records were kept there. There are no records for either Jurian Westvaal or Marretje Hansen in the church records of the Reformed Dutch Church of New Amsterdam, located on Manhattan Island.

There is a curious record that comes from Henry A. Stoutenburgh, who titles himself a “compiler” and wrote *A Documentary History of the Dutch Congregation of Oyster Bay, Queens County, Island of Nassau (now Long Island)* in a series of 8 “leaflets” between 1902 and 1907. These pamphlets contain genealogical information on Dutch settlers in New Netherland. Stoutenburgh noted the lack of official baptism, marriage, and death records, adding that these

records were commonly kept in family bibles. In Pamphlet #8, he wrote that "Jurian Westphael of Esopus" married "Marretje Hansen," the daughter of Hans Jansen and his first wife. He also noted that Marretje was "the girl bound to the tavern-keeper." Unfortunately, Stoutenburgh does not give the source of this information. Did Westphael and Hansen meet and marry in the Dutch settlement of Oyster Bay on the Island of Nassau? Stoutenburgh then names three of the children of this couple: Reymerick who married Thomas Quick in 1672; Abel, who was baptized on September 25, 1661, and Symen, who was baptized on September 30, 1663 at Kingston (Stoutenburgh 672). Did Stoutenburgh's information on the children come from a family bible or from the church records at Kingston?

On October 16, 1666, Jurien Westphael, along with Roeloff Swartwout, appears in the records with a declaration concerning the arrival of Matthys Blanshan, who with his family, is applying to settle at Kingston. (*Ulster County, N.Y. Probate Records* 31)

Jurian Westfael's name appears on a list of land patents granted between December 5, 1666 and September 8th 1709. Westfael's land patent is dated May 29, 1667. In 1664, the colony fell to the English. In 1667, in what has been termed the "Mutiny at Esopus," Juriaen Westvaal's name was on a petition to Governor Nicolls for redress of wrongs committed by English soldiers. (Collins 88, 89)

Juriaen does not appear again in the records. For this reason it is assumed that Juriaen died in late 1667 or shortly thereafter, although no record has been discovered indicating the date of death for the man. Apparently he left no will. Juriaen was survived by five or six young children, the youngest baptized on June 27, 1666. It isn't known what became of his wife. There is no record of Juriaen's widow marrying a second time. Obviously friends and neighbors stepped in to see to the welfare of the children: five of them reached adulthood and four married.

The known children of Juriaen Westvaal and Marretjen Hansen

On April 25, 1661, "Juriaen Westvaal" and "Marretje Hansen" are listed as the parents of Abell in the Kingston baptism records. On September 30, 1663, they baptized their son Symen there. On June 27, 1666, they baptized their daughter Elsjen in the church. (*Baptism and Marriage Records of the Old Dutch Church of Kingston*, 5) In his article, Collins also lists the following as children of Jurian Westvaal and Marretje Hansen: Rymerick (who married Thomas Theunisse Quick at Kingston in 1673), Johannes (who married Maritie Jacobz Cool at Kingston in 1683), and Niclaes (who married Maria Montagnje in 1701). They do not appear in the Kingston baptism records; it is likely that they were born prior to 1661, the date that records began to be kept in the church at Esopus.

1. **Rymerick** No baptism or marriage records have been located. She married Thomas Theunisse Quick at Kingston sometime before 1675. According to the baptism records of Kingston, she and Thomas had 8 children, born between 1675 and 1695. Apparently Rymerick died in 1695 or 1696; Teunis Quick married (2) Claartje de Hooges on September 24, 1696. Thomas and Claartje named their first daughter Rymarig, born on July 4, 1697. "Claes Westphale," Rymerick's brother, served as a witness to this baptism. Rymerick's name is spelled variously as Rymerick Westphale, Rhmerick Jurien, Reimerick Jurriaens and Rynberg Westvaal.

2. **Johannes** No baptism record has been located. Like his older sister, he was probably born before 1661, when baptisms began to be recorded in Kingston. On January 28, 1683, “Johannes Juriaanz Weesphaal of Foxhal in the Esopus” married “Maritie Jacobz Cool.” Both are listed as residing in Kingston. Foxhall was the estate of Thomas Chambers, a close associate of Juriaen, Johannes’ father. Apparently the relationship continued long after the death of Juriaen Westvaal in 1667. Thomas Chambers is listed as a witness to the baptism of Jacob, son of Johannes Westphalen and Marritje Kool on April 23, 1693. Johannes and Marritje had 12 children: Jurian, Maretie, Rebecka, Jannetje, Sara, Jacob, Abel, Niclaes, Claertje, Reymerich, Lena, and Rachel. All of the children were born between 1684 and 1709 and baptized in Kingston, N.Y.

3. **Niclaes** Again, no baptism record has been located. He, too, was probably born before 1661. “Claes Westphale” married (1) “Maria Montagnje” on April 21, 1701. Both Claes and Maria are listed as born in Kingston. He and Maria had one child: Jurian, born on May 10, 1702. On October 20, 1712, “Niclaas Westvaal,” the “widower of Marytjen Montanjen” married (2) Zara Van Aken. Niclaas and his second wife had the following children: Peternella, Jurian, Maria, Elizabeth, and Lydia, all born between 1713 and 1726 and baptized in the church at Kingston.

4. **Abel** This son was baptized in Kingston on September 25, 1661. No other records have been located for Abel. Presumably, he died in childhood.

5. **Symen** This child was baptized in Kingston on September 30, 1663. No marriage record has been found. Symen and Nelletje Quackbos (Quakelbosch, Kwalkenbos) are listed as the parents of Geertje, Antie, Lea, and Rachel in the baptism records of Kingston. The children were born between 1703 and 1711.

6. **Elsjen** This daughter was baptized on June 27, 1666. Apparently she never married. She is not listed as mother on any of the baptism records in Kingston. However, she lived to at least the age of nineteen. “Elsie Westvaal” and “Claus Westpaal” are witnesses to the baptism of Maretie, daughter of their older brother Johannes Westvaal and Maretie Cool in August of 1685. Simon and Elsie are also listed as witnesses to the baptism of Weyntie, daughter of Thomas Quick and their older sister, Rynberg Westvaal, on March 28, 1686.

(Sources of information on the children: *Baptism and Marriage Records of the Old Dutch Church of Kingston* and Holdridge O. Collins)

Migration to Minisink, New York

Early in the next century, three of the sons of Juriaen and Marretje would migrate to the Minissing region of New York, some 70 miles southwest of Kingston. “Johannis Westphalen”, “Charles [Niclaes/ Claes] Westphalen,” and “Simon Westphalen” are among the men listed on a deed from the indigenous peoples “for a tract of land being in the bounds of Menissing and Waggackemeck. All that certain tract or parcell of land situate lying and being in the bounds of Menissing & Waggackemeck beginning at the west bound of the land called Naponach to a small run of water called by the indian name Assawagkemeek and soe alongst said run of water and the land of Hansjoor the indian.” In exchange for the land, the natives received “fifty pounds current

money, five gunns, five blancoats, five coats of strouds, five coats of Duffels, five laps, five shirts, five pistols, five knives, five axes, five hats, five pr of stockings, five drawing knives, five swords, fifty pounds of powder, two ancors Rum, forty barrels of lead, fifty needles, fifty ailds [?], fifty fishing hooks, eight Barrolls strong beere and six fine coats.” The document was signed in Kingston on June 8, 1696. Fifteen natives affixed their mark to the sale. (Cuddeback 30-31)

Church records confirm that the Westvaal family had migrated to the Minisink area. In 1714 and 1715, “Zymen Westvaal” and “Pieterelletjen Kwakkenbos” (Symen Westvaal and Nelletje Quackbos) served as witnesses to the baptism of Johannes, son of Jacob Kuykendaal and Zara Westvaal, who was listed as baptized in Minisink. (The baptism was recorded in Kingston.) On November 19, 1717, Jacob "Westvaal," son of Johannes and "Margrieta du Duyster" were married in the Old Dutch Church of Kingston. On the marriage record it states that Jacob was born in Kingston and Margrieta in Hurley and that both now resided in Menissing (Minisink). (*Baptism and Marriage Records of the Old Dutch Church of Kingston*)

The first baptisms to be recorded for the Dutch Reformed Church at Machackemeck in Minisink were between August 1716 and January 1719. They were recorded by the Reverend Petrus Vos, who came from Kingston and was the first minister of the gospel among the settlers of Minissing. The name of Westfael appears a number of times in these records. (*Minisink Valley Reformed Dutch Church Records*, iii, 97)

Note: The author is a descendant of Juriaen Westvaal through his oldest son, Johannes.

Sources:

Baptism and Marriage Records of the Old Dutch Church of Kingston, Ulster County, New York ... from their commencement in 1660. Transcribed and ed. Roswell Randall Hoes. New York: De Winne Press, 1891. *Google Books*. Web. 30 May 2015.

Collins, Holdridge Ozro. "The Westfall Family." *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, Vol. XXXIII, New York: The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1902. *Google Books*. Web. 15 May 2015.

Cuddeback, William Louis. *Caudebec in America: A Record of the Descendants of Jacques Caudebec 1700-1920*. New York: Tobias A Wright Pub., 1919. *Archive.org*. Web. 23 June 2015.

Minisink Valley Reformed Dutch Church Records, 1716-1830. New York: The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1913; *Archive.org*. Web. 30 May 2015.

O’Callaghan, E.B. *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland, 1638-1674*. Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons, & Co., 1868. *Archive.org* Web. 25 June 2015.

Stoutenburgh, Henry A. *A Documentary History of the Dutch Congregation of Oyster Bay, Queens County, Island of Nassau (now Long Island)* Pamphlet #8. New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1905. *Archive.org*. Web. 22 June 2015.

The Dutch Records of Kingston, Ulster County, New York, Part I: May 31, 1658 - November 18, 1664 Esopus-Wildwyck. Samuel Oppenheim, Trans. New York: New York State Historical Association, 1912. *Archive.org*. Web. 5 June 2015.

Ulster County, N.Y. Probate Records. Abstract, trans. and notes by Gustave Anjou. Vol. 1. New York: Gustave Anjou, 1906. *Archive.org*. Web. 16 June 2015.

Van Buren, August H. *A History of Ulster County Under Dominion of the Dutch.* Kingston, NY, 1923. *jrbooksonline.com* Web. 22 June 2015.

Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts. A.J.F. van Laer, Trans. & ed. Albany: University of the State of New York, 1908. *Google Books*. Web. 16 June 2015.

© Susan McNelley/ www.tracingsbysam.com/ June 2015