

The Source of African Ancestry in the Young Family -
Wife of Henry Windecker, Dorothy Pickard (Daughter of Nicholas Pickard
and Anna Barbara Weiser):
Some Genealogical Evidence

Genetic Hypothesis: Since the 1980s the present author has maintained that while there is no solid evidence, there were a number of hints that suggested that Pvt. Henry Windecker of Butler's Rangers married Dorothy Pickard (Pickert), both of Canajoharie, prior to moving to the Wilkes Barre area of Pennsylvania in 1770. Since the proposed father of Dorothy, Nicholas Pickert's mother Eve (Claesen) Pickert was reported by Sir William Johnson to be a "Mulatto", therefore in addition to genealogical evidence, it was hypothesized that some descendants would retain a small trace of the African ancestry. It is only very recently that the power of personal genomics and chip technology has allowed an assessment of the percentage of for example African in the genome of an individual. If it can be shown that a scattering of the descendants of Dorothy Windecker retain a small amount (percentage) of African, then it will be accepted that this source is Eva Pickert.

Genomic testing completed to date has found small segments of African DNA in seven descendants of Dorothy Windecker, who is the ancestor in common for these individuals. Hence it is reasonable to tentatively conclude, based on the above hypothesis, that there is an African signal retained by some of the descendants of Dorothy derived from the latter's paternal grandmother. The study exploring the DNA evidence obtained so far can be seen by [clicking here](#). For a related study pertaining to the author and his wife [click here](#). This data can only be considered meaningful with a due consideration of the genealogical records.

Genealogical Evidence:

- 1) Number of African descendant candidates – There is only one free African individual noted for the period of circa 1760 (when Henry Windecker married Dorothy). She was Evighe (Eva) Claesen Pickert (circa 1680 – 1767) who resided in the Canajoharie District from at least 1753 to her death in 1767. She lived on the River flats near Little Falls and the Canajoharie Indian Village and settlements. Eva was a probable grandmother of Dorothy.
- 2) Family of Eva Pickert – Eva Claesen's (likely born about 1680) parent's names are unknown, although her father was likely a Nicholas (Claes) due to use of Dutch patronymic naming practices of the time. She was residing in Schenectady at the time of her marriage (12 November 1698, Albany) to Bartolomew Pickard (Pickert), son of Bartholomew Pickard and Dorothy, who was baptized 18 September 1676, St. Martins, Leistershire, England. Bart and Eva had four children, baptized at Schenectady or Albany:
 - a) Bartholomew bp. 9 January 1700 Schenectady, married 3 August 1722 Schenectady (he of Schoharie) Anna Catharina.
 - b) Nicholas bp. 23 February 1701 Schenectady, married 1722 Anna Barbara Weiser.

- c) Dorothy bp. 28 July 1703 Schenectady, married circa 1725 Jan Pieterse Mabie.
- d) Rachel bp. 29 January 1707 Albany, married circa 1730 Thomas Davey.
- e) Gertrude bp. 2 January 1710 Albany. The present author has not been able to locate this document using two transcripts of the Albany records.

The only likely parent of Dorothy Windecker would be Nicholas (there is less evidence that her parent was Dorothy who married Jan Pieterse Mabie), this based on all the available historical records relating to the Mohawk Valley – which are admittedly few and far between.

To build a case in such instances it is imperative to locate circumstantial evidence that, when added up, is clear and convincing, and on balance of probabilities can be accepted as true.

- 3) Family of Nicholas Pickert – Nicholas Pickert, baptized 23 February 1701 Schenectady, married Anna Barbara Weiser, daughter of Johann Conrad Weiser and Anna Magdalena Ubelin in 1722. Internet sources typically note (although this is not terribly convincing since there are never any sources) that the couple had seven children. The number and order of the children is largely guesswork. It makes sense that Nicholas would name a daughter Dorothy after his sister and grandmother:

- a) John Pickert born about 1723 married Anna Rosina Countryman.
- b) William Henry Pickert born about 1725 married Elizabeth Wintermute. He died 1804, Four Mile Creek, Niagara, Ontario,
- c) Conrad Weiser Pickert born 5 March 1727 married June 1751 Anna Margaretha Walrath.
- d) Bartholomew Pickert born 5 March 1727 (twin) married Maria Catharina.
- e) Jacobus James Pickert born about 1730 married Gertrude Hostman
- f) Rachel Pickert born 29 October 1733 married Johannes Countryman.
- g) Leah Pickert married Frederick Smith.
- h) Eva Pickert married Conrad Windecker
- i) Dorothy Pickert born about 1741 married Henry Windecker

- 4) Association (Residence and Marriage) between the Pickert and Windecker families in New York – It is well established that in the Colonial era of Upstate New York, particularly among the Palatine German families, among whom the Pickert's were associated, certain marriage conventions were typical. Bartholomew was even listed in 1712 as one of the “distressed Palatines”, and in 1723 was among the first to take up a Palatine grant in the Mohawk Valley – at Stone Arabia. Here marriage was often determined by proximity and by others who married into the same families. In other words it was typical for the children in one family to marry the children in adjoining families, often brothers marrying neighbor's daughters (for example). Naming patterns (especially when family names are rare such as Leah in a Palatine community) are extremely important in

making linkages based on circumstantial evidence. While the first three children, John, William and Conrad resided nearby in what became Minden Township or at least adjoining Patents in Canajoharie, the latter 6 all resided on the Windecker Tract (actually the Windecker, Countryman and Leib Patent), known as “Dutchtown”, near Minden and Little Falls in the Canajoharie District. Some, including Henry Windecker, also had land on the adjoining Van Horne Patent, and typically the lots abutted each other. An exploration of the land and militia records (Captain Jacob Klock’s Company) for 1763 and the tax records for 1766 show the following in relation to those residing on the Windecker Patent:

- a) Jacobus Pickert and Gertrude Windecker were granted Lot 2 (later surveyed as Lot 3, by the latter’s father Hartmann Windecker on 28 March 1754, but sold their interest to Frederick Blank in 1765, whereupon they appear to have become (temporarily) tenants on the lands of this kinsman of both of them, Henry Windecker (see g below).
- b) Thomas Deby (Davey) married Rachel Pickert (sister of Nicholas, daughter of Bartholomew Pickert and Eva Claessen) resided as tenants on Lot 4.
- c) Eva (daughter of Nicholas Pickert) married Conrad Windecker (son of George) resided on Lot 5B as owners.
- d) Bartholomew Pickert “Jr.” (likely the son of Nicholas) also resided on Lot 5B as tenant.
- e) George Countryman (mother was Maria Windecker, sister of George, Conrad, and Gertrude) resided as owner on Lot 6A.
- f) Frederick Smith married Leah Pickert (daughter of Nicholas) resided as tenants on Lot 6A.
- g) Henry Windecker and Dorothy Pickert resided as owners on Lot 7A. However on 13 January 1767 Henry mortgaged property he owned in the Van Horne Patent, specifically Lot 4 in the 3rd allotment which fronted the Mohawk River.
- h) Jacobus (James) Pickert (son of Nicholas) who married Gertrude Windecker (sister of George and Conrad) resided as a tenant on Henry’s property Lot 7A.

The records for lands immediately adjacent to the Windecker Tract, on the Van Horne Patent including the islands and flats of the Mohawk River near the Mohawk Canajoharie Castle include:

- i) Jacob Haberman (if Jacob Hosterman was a sponsor of the baptism of a child of Henry Windecker in Pennsylvania). His wife Barbara could have been another child of Nicholas Pickert. Then four individuals before,
- j) John Pickard (eldest son of Nicholas), on 29 January 1767, mortgaged Lot 7 in the 3rd Allotment (close to Henry Windecker’s property) of the Van Horne Patent, as well as Lots 5 and 8 in the 4th Allotment (immediately above the Jacobus Mabie property).
- k) Joseph Mebie and Johan Joost Schuyler, then two individuals before,

- l) Jacobus Meebie. On the 1764 map of the Van Horne Patent he held Lot 8 of the 3rd Allotment (very close to Henry Windecker's property).
 - m) Bartholomew Meebie, then 6 persons before,
 - n) William Pickert (son of Nicholas Pickert), who, along with Henry Windecker and Frederick Smith, resided in Pennsylvania at the time of the Revolution and came to Ontario, then 3 persons before,
 - o) Johannis Countryman who married Rachel Pickert (daughter of Nicholas).
- 5) Association between Pickert and Windecker families in Pennsylvania – In 1770 a number of Mohawk Valley families moved to the Wilkes Barre area of Pennsylvania. On 17 June 1770 a list was composed on all the settlers of the five townships then being surveyed within the Susquehanna Company Purchase of Connecticut. On the list of 3 October 1772 Henry Windecker was a signator, but not William Pickard or Frederick Smith. Among those who left and later associated with one another in Ontario were Henry Windecker and Nicholas Phillips (whose importance will be seen later), and his proposed brothers in law Frederick Smith, and William Pickert. In addition nephews Nicholas (son of Conrad) and John (son of Jacobus) were residing in the same township as Windecker in 1777, but appear to have returned to the Mohawk Valley and surrounds.

Henry appears to have resided in or near Penn Township (Snyder County – then Westmorland) where he attended the Salem Lutheran Church in 1774. In the tax lists of August 1776 for the districts of Westmoreland County, William Pickard was residing in the North District (Exeter and Providence), and both Frederick Smith and Henry Windecker were living in the North District ("Up the River"), later Westmoreland County. Nicholas and John Pickert were young and likely tenants living with their uncles. However in June 1777, while Frederick Smith is still on the list in the same location, neither William Pickard nor Henry Windecker are anywhere to be found. They had left to join Butler's Rangers.

Also Nicholas Pickard and his cousin John Pickard, proposed nephews to Henry Windecker, as well as William Pickard and Frederick Smith, were living there in 1777, although their names did not appear on the tax lists since they were likely tenants. However both are found in the Committee of Safety Records for that year. On 7 March 1777, Nicholas Pickard of Wyoming sent a letter to his cousin John Pickard residing in Penn Township, alerting him to an Indian raid that was in the offing. The Committee of Safety got a hold of the letter and examined the said John who, on 17 April, reported the following:

*He saith, that he went up the river, some time about last Christmas, from Middletown to Wyoming, in a boat, and at Wyoming he met with the aforesaid **Nicholas Pickard**, his own cousin, and that they two went by land about twenty miles further up the river, to a place called Tankhannock, to see some friends, and being in the house of a certain **Nicholas Phillips**, he, the said*

Phillips, told his cousin and him that the Indians had told him they would come down, and cut off all against this spring, or as soon as they got their orders; and that they would in particular strike upon the Mohawk river and the waters of the Susquehannough.....

Nicholas Pickard was also brought before the Committee and:

confesseth, that he is in connection with the ministerial troops at Niagara

and was thus sent to prison in Philadelphia in May of 1778 (pension application of Adam Wisner who transported Pickard to Philadelphia).

The two cousins are most likely Nicholas (born 1752) son of Conrad Pickard (son of Nicholas); and John (born 1760) the son of Jacobus Pickard (son of Nicholas).

There was a further connection with Nicholas Phillips noted above in that at Machiche Quebec, 2 July 1781, Elizabeth Phillips and Dorothy Windecker, “wives of men in Butler’s Rangers”, petitioned the British Government to be allowed to join their husbands at Niagara. Elizabeth was the wife of Nicholas Phillips noted in two places above. It appears that “Nicholas Phillips Jr.” born 17 April 1732 near Schoharie, was the son of Claes Philip bp. Albany 5 May 1700 “of the Mohax contray” to Philip Philipse de Moor. In a 1679 court case Philip the Moor and two other “Negroes” (Claes and Jacob) were tried for the theft of a sliver thimble. He later owned land in the 1680s and 1690s at “The Willows” above Schenectady toward Schoharie (near the original lands of Sir William Johnson) as Philip Philipsen de Moor (Burke, 1991) who married a Dutch woman Elizabeth Gansevoort. Hence, Nicholas Phillips of Butler’s Rangers would have been the son of a “Mulatto” – and perhaps related in some way to Dorothy Windecker’s grandmother.

To repeat, at the conclusion of the War, Henry, Frederick and William moved to the Niagara Region in Ontario; but Nicholas and John Pickert, despite their original Loyalist leanings, appear to have returned to the Mohawk Valley.

Others with the rare surname Pickard who were residing in the Susquehanna Settlement, in addition to William, were also Benjamin, and James (his two sons who served in Butler’s Rangers). Hence it seems possible and perhaps likely that Henry Windecker and a brother in law residing on the Windecker Tract, and another residing a short distance away on the Van Horne Patent, all packed up and moved to Pennsylvania at about the same time; and left to join Butler’s Rangers and ultimately move to Ontario, about the same time.

6) Association between the Pickert and Windecker families in Ontario - On 11 August 1786 Henrick Windecker Late of Susquehanna River in Northumberland County in Pennsylvania “but now of Niagara” submitted a claim for losses. William Pickard and Frederick Smith late of the same place and also now of Niagara declared that they were

familiar with the property of Windecker and attested to the veracity of what he claimed. Their certificate also said that they were late of Northumberland County, Pennsylvania (NAC, A.O. 13, Vol. 57). William Pickard and Frederick Smith were the proposed brothers in law to Henry Windecker. As noted before, typically on documents such as these (and baptismal records) the individuals are close relatives.

Similarly William Pickard submitted his claim (undated) for losses wherein he noted not only property in Westmoreland Pennsylvania (where he was residing at the time of the War), but also land in Tryon County (Canajoharie District) consisting of islands in the Mohawk River and 3 acres on the River bank which he had purchased from (by land exchange) Jacob and Philip Skyler, but which was then in the possession of his (Pickard's) nephew. He and his two sons served in Butler's Rangers. Frederick Smith also submitted a declaration here confirming what Pickert claimed (Proceedings of Loyalist Commissioners, Montreal, 1787, Vol. XX, Claim 815 – Second Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario, by Alexander Fraser, Part II).

Lewis Mabie was born about 1739 (according to his tombstone from the McAfee Cemetery in Bertie Township), had a daughter Dorothy, and died in Black Rock, Niagara, Ontario. He was first cousin to Dorothy Pickert, wife of Henry Windecker who held the lease to the Black Rock ferry in the 1790s, and also had lands in the Bertie Township area of Niagara. He served in Peter Ten Broeck's unit of Butler's Rangers during the Revolution (as did Henry Windecker). It is known that neighbors and kin tended to serve in the same unit, so this association may be significant. Here it is proposed that he is first cousin to Dorothy Windecker via his mother Dorothy Pickert, wife of Jan Pieterse Mabie.

The genealogical evidence above is far from conclusive, however when blended with the genetics findings, it lends weight to the circumstantial evidence such that taken as a whole the data is reasonably clear and convincing that Dorothy, with wife of Henry Windecker, was born Dorothy Pickert, the granddaughter of Eva (Claesen) Pickert, a Mulatto woman. However, it is important to examine the historical data that indicates that Eva Pickert was a "Mulatto".

Historical Evidence as to Eva (Claessen) Pickert's African Ancestry:

The hypothesis, based on genetic findings of a small percentage of African ancestry in at least three descendants of Henry and Dorothy Windecker, and the circumstantial genealogical evidence noted above, is that the wife of Pvt. Henry Windecker was Dorothy Pickert and that she was of African descent.

Dorothy would have been the granddaughter of Eve (Classen) Pickert, who frustrated Sir William Johnson by selling liquor to the Indians of Canajoharie and allegedly attempting to scam them out of their land. On 17 February 1761 the secretary to Sir William Johnson noted that, ***an old Mulatto Woman named Eve Pickerd waited on Sir William with a Deed of gift (for a parcel of low, and wooded land containing about 1100 acres) which she had, which was dated last September, and which Sir William discovered had been executed only two days ago, by three Indians whom she called to her house, &***

whom she, and her Grandson (who sell liquor) had made drunk, & then prevailed on them to sign the Deed, without having a License from the Governour, or President (JP, Vol. 10, p.220). Two days later Johnson himself wrote to Cadwallader Colden and noted his concerns about, *Ury Klock, & one Eve Pickard a Mullatto Woman living on the Flatts of Canajoharie* (JP, Vol. 3, p.339). As to the meaning of the word Mullatto at this time and at this place, Singer 2008 described a typical description in an advertisement relating to, *escaped Africans*. According to “*The New York Gazette*’ of July 24, 1758, “*Runaway from Ida Meyer on the 20th of June last, a Mulatto wench named Ohnech, but goes by the name Hannah and pretends to be free And speaks both English and Dutch very well*. Singer comments as follows: *The enslaved woman is a ‘Mulatto’, or person of mixed race. One of her parents or grandparents, probably her father or paternal grandfather, was White* (p.55).

This evidence is virtually unassailable, however there is not one single genealogy of the family on the Internet which mentions the African connection. The most conservative versions look at the surname of Eva written at the time of her marriage to Bartholomew Pickard. Classez and variants such as Claessen simply means child of Claes which is a nickname for Nicholas. Hence some researchers posit that her father was one Nicolas Classez. Others seem to go all out, finding a Claes Lourens Van der Volgen born 1650 Purmerend, Holland who married Marytje Teunisse Swart born circa 1663 Schenectady and so through both lines provides a lengthy genealogy back to the 1500s in Holland and Norway. Considering that this couple are supposed to have been married in 1684 in Schenectady, this would make it difficult to “fit” Eva in after the marriage – considering that she was married in 1698. Other genealogists provide a different mother for Eva, one Gertrude Van Petten who again has an impressive lengthy genealogy (although this Gertrude is likely the Geertruy Klassen who was a witness at the baptism of Dorothy Pickard in 1703 in Schenectady. She was likely the Gertrude Claes Fredericksen Van Petten, born 1692, who married Claes Lourens Van der Voglen junior, who was born about 1687. So where does the African parent fit into all this? It is quite possible that Eva was an elder daughter of Claes Fredericksen Van Petten who was a slave owner in Schenectady and may have fathered a child with one of the African woman in the family. The Van Petten family or their slaves spoke Mohawk and hosted Tiononderoge Mohawks such as Johannes and Aaron Hill Oseraghete. There are a number of reports that Eva also understood Mohawk very well.

One family researcher alludes to the family being “Black Dutch”, a term which has multiple meanings fraught with imprecision. Occasionally it refers to tri-racial individuals, but as often simply a swarthy complected person such as a Portuguese or Moor, and even Germans with swarthy skin tone. However this is the closest that the present author has seen any family member acknowledge the “Mulatto” designation for Eva by Sir William Johnson – it seems to be simply ignored.

The denial shown by genealogists, who are often descendants of Eva, is not shared by academics. For example Conyers (2003) compared Eve to a Seneca who had one African parent and one Seneca parent. As to Sun Fish, *The Sun Fish stands as an example of one who oscillated between identities – sometimes a Seneca warrior, husband, and father; at*

other times a free mulatto spy, informant, and cattle trader. His particular identity was dictated by his needs and the needs of others with whom he was in contact within a given situation (p. 91). In relation to Eva, Conyers stated that, The attitude of the Indians toward race on New York's frontier is further demonstrated in the case of Eve Pickard, considered by the English to be a mulatto. Pickard, like Sun Fish, was multi-lingual. She interacted regularly with the Mohawk and spoke their language. In a land dispute between the Canajoharie Indians and Pickard, she was denounced not as a mulatto, but as white (Hart, 1994: 24-26). These Mohawk apparently defined whiteness, as late as the 1760s, not in biological but rather in behavioral terms. In attempting to bilk Indians of their land, Pickard was behaving as white people did, and therefore she was white. This reveals nothing of how Eve Pickard thought of herself any more that it is known whether the Sun Fish thought of himself as a Seneca or a mulatto (p. 270).

It is of course possible that her surname does come from her father, one Claes, but he could have been African. In exploring the records relating to Schenectady around the time of the birth of Eva we find one Claes, the “slave of Gerrit Bancker”. In 1679, one year before the birth of Eva, was put on trial in Schenectady for the theft of silver. This material had allegedly transported to Albany with the help of one Jacob, the slave of Sweer Teunissen van Velsen (Burke, 1991).

Thus no one can say with any certainty the parentage of Eva, at least at this point in time. The most recent attempt to determine Eva's parentage is Morgan (2010), who also provides a detailed biographical study. [Click here](#) to view this academic paper published in New York History.

Further biographical and historical information can be found by [clicking here](#).

Conclusion: The genealogical record points to Dorothy, wife of Henry Windecker, being the daughter of Nicholas Pickert and Anna Barbara Weiser. Assuming that the Census of Niagara of 1783 age for Dorothy is correct then she was born in 1742/3. This would make Dorothy the sibling or first cousin to a great many individuals residing on the Windecker Tract and the Van Horne Patent, the two locations where Henry Windecker possessed land and resided before leaving for Pennsylvania in 1770. If correct, then as with Henry Windecker, his wife Dorothy's brother William Pickert, and first cousin, Lewis Mabie, also joined Butler's Rangers, and came to permanently reside in Niagara Ontario.

Also, there are The evidence of the genetic, genealogical (admittedly much of it circumstantial) and historical data appear to point toward Eva Pickard being a half African mulatto and the grandmother of Dorothy Pickert, the wife of Henry Windecker – parents of Elizabeth who married Sgt. Daniel Young of Butler's Rangers and progenitor of a very large extended family (let alone the large numbers of other branches leading from Bartholomew and Eva). It is important, in the eyes of this genealogist and descendant, to attempt to use all available sources to set the record straight.

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