

## Chapter 1

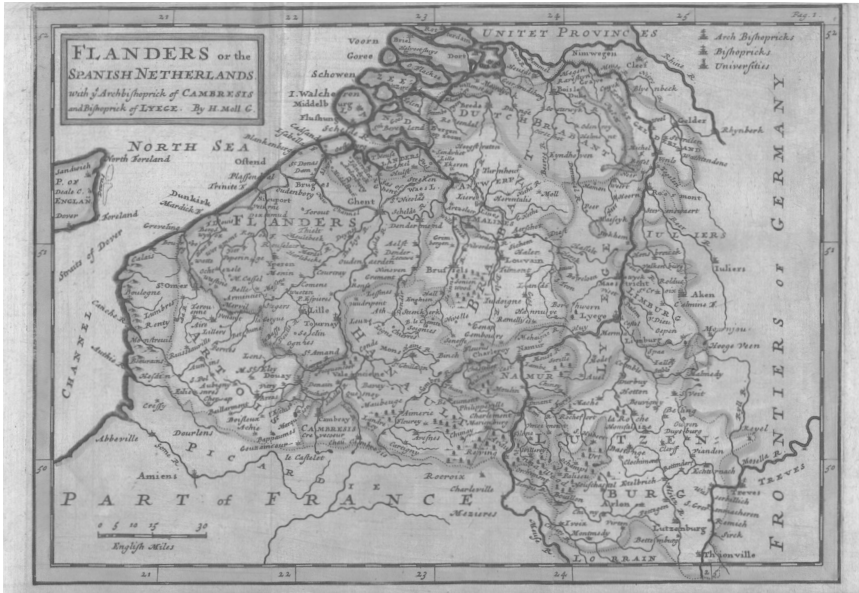
# ❧ THE WALLOONS' ENGLISH TOWN ❧

In 1677, a small band of Walloon emigrants from Europe made the decision to establish a new community in the mid-Hudson River Valley in a Dutch cultural region within an English colony. To do so, twelve men purchased a large tract of land from the Esopus Indians, for which they were granted a patent the following year by the royal governor, Edmund Andros. The creation of this new village, which they named New Paltz, was the culmination of decades of migration in both Europe and America, motivated by ongoing wartime violence as well as a search for economic opportunity. Their search was ultimately successful, and they established a town, which they and their descendants socially and politically dominated for more than two hundred years. In creating their own town, however, they never intended to live in isolation from those of other ethnic groups. Because of their extensive local control, they never felt threatened by those who were not Walloons. They therefore allowed those of other ethnicities into their community, including those of British birth or heritage, as they could do so entirely on their own terms.

### **The Walloon Diaspora**

The founders' heritage lay in the Walloon region of the southern Netherlands and northern France, which had been a politically unstable place since the mid-sixteenth century (see Map 1.1). The challenges the Walloons faced motivated many to seek better situations in other European regions, such as in England, the United Provinces (after the 1579 Union of Utrecht), and the Palatinate (Die Pfalz). The number of migrants sometimes made it possible to establish expatriate communities abroad, such as in Canterbury, England, the history of which is connected to the New Paltz story.

The earliest expatriates who relocated to Canterbury did so as early as the 1540s, having migrated for economic reasons. A few remained there even through the revival of Roman Catholicism during the reign of Mary I. After the 1558 accession of the Protestant queen, Elizabeth I, more Protestant Walloons from the southern Netherlands began to migrate to England to free themselves from the vicious persecution of the Catholic King Philip II of Spain, to whom they were subject in their homeland. In England, Walloons were permitted free exercise of their religion, as well as a number of privileges related to the manufacture and sale of goods, most importantly cloth. Some of this second wave of refugees settled in London, but in 1561, the queen



**Map 1.1.** The Spanish Netherlands, Herman Moll, c. 1707. *Twenty-four new and accurate maps of the severall parts of Europe.* London: J. Nicholson, c. 1707. Collection of the author.

permitted twenty-five of these recently arrived households to relocate to Sandwich. The situation in the Netherlands became worse for Protestants in 1566, when Philip II sent the Duke of Alva to crush the Protestant movement there, motivating more Walloon religious refugees to migrate to England. By 1574, some of these new migrants had settled in Canterbury, joining the small number of Walloons who had been there since the 1540s. The size of the Walloon population in Canterbury grew even further when the queen directed a number of Walloons in Sandwich to relocate to Canterbury in 1575, as their numbers were growing beyond what the town of Sandwich could support. In 1579, the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands joined together through the Union of Utrecht in pursuit of independence from Spain, but the southern provinces remained under the unquestioned rule of Spain, and persecution under the duke continued. Expatriation for religious reasons went on unabated, such that by the end of the sixteenth century, the number of Protestant Walloons that remained in the Spanish Netherlands, as these southern provinces were then named, was “minuscule.”<sup>1</sup>

As the Walloon population grew in Canterbury, it became clear that all had not migrated to the city due to religious persecution in their homeland. In 1582, Canterbury’s Burghmote court noted that there were “so many as are alreadye here abydinge that are not come for their consciences as protestants for defence of their faith & of the worde of God. And whome the Elders of the said congregacion will not allowe of and answeere for that they shall be sent away and not suffered here to tarrye.” In spite of this protest,

the number of Walloons in Canterbury continued to increase over the subsequent decades, such that by 1627, more than a thousand immigrants had settled there, mostly from a region extending from Armentières to Valenciennes. All did not remain, however, as some refugees returned home when the level of conflict in the continental Walloon region diminished in the opening decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately for the Walloons, this stability did not last, as in 1635, France declared war on Spain. This new conflict motivated Walloons once again to seek safety elsewhere in Europe, including England. This third wave of expatriation was motivated neither by economic nor religious reasons as in the past but by wartime violence or impending violence. On March 13, 1635, the mayor of Dover wrote to the Lord Warden, remarking that “near a hundred men, women and children, French and Dutch, all Protestants, some of them bringing with them their goods and household stuff whose dwellings were in and near Calais, but have lands and tenements in Flanders, and flee hither for security of the same in respect to the war likely to be betwixt France and Spain (as they say).” These new refugees were sent inland, including some to Canterbury. France invaded the province of Artois in the Spanish Netherlands in 1640 during the Thirty Years’ War, such that the number of refugees from wartime violence increased even further. (France annexed Artois in 1659.) The records of the Burghmote in Canterbury, in an order dated September 21, 1641, note that since the reign of Elizabeth I, the Walloons “have lived peacablie and religiously and with their manufactures of spyneing and weaving by them introduced . . . . They therefore humbly desired this Court that in regard of the present Calamyties of warre in Picardie Arthois & fflandre many of the wallon people daily resort until this Citty and more daily are expected who being protestants and manufacturers in weaving desire to ioyn themselves unto the wallon Congregacon here.”<sup>3</sup>

The Walloon community in Canterbury soon came to include Matthieu Blanchan and his family, who later would be linked to the history of New Paltz. Blanchan was born in the village of Noeville o corne in the province of Artois in the first decade of the seventeenth century. By 1633, he had relocated to the town of Armentières (near the city of Lille in Flanders), where he married Magdelaine Joire, a native of the village. The Blanchans remained there until at least August 1642, but by May 16, 1647, they had migrated to Canterbury. Why the Blanchans left their home in Armentières some time in the mid-1640s is unclear, as military conflict did not heavily affect Flanders until twenty years later when the French took Lille during the 1667–1668 War of Devolution, officially gaining the territory through the 1668 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Perhaps Blanchan was simply making a preemptive move, seeking a place of physical safety for himself and his family even before it was necessary, or perhaps his goals were primarily economic. In any event, his motivations were much more material than spiritual.<sup>4</sup>

Exactly how long the Blanchans stayed in Canterbury is not precisely known. They were still there in April 1649, but by 1652, Matthieu Blanchan and family had relocated yet again, possibly because England was suffering from a depression that began in 1646 and lasted until 1650. This time

Blanchan chose the German state of Die Pfalz, also known as the Palatinate, another region to which Walloons had been drawn since the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

In 1562, the Elector Frederick III, the ruler of Die Pfalz, had allowed sixty Walloon families to settle in a former monastery at Gross-Frankenthal, providing them with a charter that established the autonomy of their new community. The elector subsequently provided additional opportunities for Walloons to settle in his realm, and soon these refugees established a sufficient number of congregations to support the formation in 1571 of a classis of the Walloon Protestant Church. In 1607, another group of French-speaking Calvinists received a charter from Frederick III's successor, Frederick IV, to establish a community in Mannheim, but that community did not substantially grow before the advent of the Thirty Year's War. During that war, the Palatinate suffered extreme violence and depopulation due to emigration, military conflict, and famine, dramatically reducing the strength of its Walloon congregations.<sup>6</sup>

After the war's conclusion in 1648, the new elector, Charles Louis, aimed to rebuild his domain by attracting immigrants to his realm, particularly those with skills and resources, by offering a number of economic and religious freedoms. It was these freedoms and economic opportunities that apparently drew Blanchan, as they did a number of other Walloon migrants from the Spanish Netherlands, who strengthened the expatriate community in and around Mannheim. That community included many others who would later found the village of New Paltz, including members of the DuBois and Crispell families, both of which were originally from near Lille like Blanchan himself. It is not known exactly when members of the DuBois and Crispell families had relocated to Mannheim after the end of the Thirty Years' War, but they were soon united through marriage with the Blanchan family. Louis DuBois married Catherine, the daughter of Matthieu and Magdelaine Blanchan in October 1655, and in January 1660, Antoine Crispell was joined in matrimony with Catherine's sister, Marie.<sup>7</sup>

As the Palatinate had attracted the Blanchan family, so too did it attract the Bevier family, members of which had been migrating throughout Europe for reasons similar to those that had motivated the Blanchans. One of the Beviers, Louis, would eventually continue these migrations to the New World. Louis' father, also named Louis, was originally from Seloignes, one of the villages of Chimay in Hainault, a province of the Spanish Netherlands. As an adolescent, Louis the elder, along with his family of iron workers, had moved to Sweden in the 1630s to work in their trade; but Louis Sr. later relocated to the region around Mannheim and Frankenthal by 1645, where his son Louis was born. Louis the elder moved his family yet again around 1650, this time to Russia, in the employ of a Dutch businessman who was working to develop the iron and steel industry there. By 1655, however, he had returned to Die Pfalz, where Louis, his son, grew to adulthood and where he married Marie LeBlanc in 1673 in the town of Speyer.<sup>8</sup>

The other Walloons who later became involved in the New Paltz project also settled in the Palatinate after the Thirty Years' War, most likely because

of wartime violence in or near their homeland. Christian Deyo and his family, from St.-Pol-sur-Ternoise near Arras in Artois, had emigrated to Mutterstadt in the Palatine before 1655 during the Franco-Spanish War, where most of his children were born. The brothers Jean and Abraham Hasbrouck and their father, natives of Calais, were also living in the Palatine towns of Mutterstadt and Mannheim by 1655. It is possible that these Hasbrouck brothers were cousins of Louis Bevier. Hugo Freer, a native of Herly on the western border of Artois, was also living in Mannheim by 1660, where he married his first wife. After her death, he married Jeanne Wibau, who was from near Tournai in the county of Hainault in the Spanish Netherlands; she was quite possibly the niece of Christian Deyo's wife Jannetje Wibau. The brothers Simon and Andries LeFevre also migrated to the Palatinate, presumably after the Thirty Years' War, although at what date is unknown. They originally hailed from Lorraine, a Walloon region that the French crown sought to gain beginning in the 1640s.<sup>9</sup>

Although Mannheim was growing and beginning to thrive, many of the early settlers chose not to stay. Matthieu Blanchan and his wife Magdelaine left in 1660, and there is nothing to suggest that anything other than economic opportunity motivated them to seek a new home yet again. Traveling aboard *De Vergulde Otter*, a ship of the Dutch West India Company, they and their three young children set sail on April 27, 1660, arriving in Nieuw Amsterdam in the Dutch colony of Nieuw Nederland several months later. They were accompanied by their daughter Marie and her husband Antoine Crispell. Louis DuBois and his wife Catherine Blanchan, along with their young sons Abraham and Isaac, arrived soon after. These three related families migrated to the Esopus, a region about halfway between Nieuw Amsterdam (later Manhattan) and Beverwyck (later Albany), to the town of Wiltwijck (later Kingston). By 1663, the Blanchan, DuBois, and Crispell family members had moved to Nieuw Dorp (later Hurley) about three miles south. They were apparently welcomed in this primarily Dutch region, as they were able to acquire land grants similar in size to those given to local Dutch men. As land was the basis of local social and political power, their acquisition of it allowed them to establish themselves as influential members of their new village. Louis DuBois's social position was reinforced when he was appointed a local magistrate after the English conquest.<sup>10</sup>

Those Walloons who remained in the Palatinate faced renewed violence when war broke out between the Holy Roman Empire and France in 1672. When the French military laid waste to a portion of the Palatinate in 1674, some chose to seek safety in the New World, including a number who later settled in the Esopus. That violence and the fear of violence motivated the migration of some Walloons to the Esopus is reinforced by the only surviving piece of direct evidence referencing the reasons why the future New Paltz founders relocated to America, a fragment of a 1676 letter sent from the town of Speyer in the Palatinate to America in 1676, which descended in the Hasbrouck family. In that letter, the unidentified author refers to the privations that his family faced as a result of the siege of the nearby city of Philipsburg. That city was under the control of French forces, as Louis XIV

was attempting to increase his domain by seizing lands of the German states contiguous to France. The French occupation was contested by the forces of the Holy Roman Emperor, which, as an entrenched force, were causing material hardships and perhaps even presenting physical threats to the Walloons in Die Pfalz. The author writes, “As for us we have always great wars since your departure and we are still staying in this town [Speyer] waiting for better things. We have constantly lost our cattle and our harvest these two years past and this last summer were always with weapons in hand . . . if peace is not made we have nothing to expect in this quarter but all sorts of misery and poverty.” The author further implores the recipient to “write us as quickly as possibly how it goes in your country and what there is of it, for if it is good I am always of the same intention as when you left here, to come and find you; but if it does not suit you well, I hope that you would return here near us,” suggesting that safety and sustenance is what both the author and the recipient sought.<sup>11</sup>

Motivated by wartime violence, Christian Deyo and his son, Pierre, and daughters, Margaret, Elizabeth, and Maria, left the Palatinate for the New World in 1675. Like the Blanchan-DuBois-Crispell group before them, they first settled in Kingston, New York. There they anchored another node of interrelated Walloon families similar to that which centered around the Blanchan family. On the ship with the Deyos was Abraham Hasbrouck, who married Margaret Deyo in 1681, six years after their immigration to New York. When he and the Deyo family arrived in Kingston, they reunited with Jean Hasbrouck (Abraham’s brother) and his wife Anna Deyo (the fourth daughter of Christian Deyo) who had come to North America in 1673. Hugo Freer and his second wife, Jeanne Wibau (possibly a niece by marriage of Christian Deyo), also came in 1677. The brothers Simon and Andries LeFevre had already immigrated to North America in the early 1660s, later settling in the Esopus. Andries never married, but he nevertheless became linked to many of the Walloons in the Kingston area through his brother Simon, who married Elizabeth Deyo, daughter of Christian Deyo, in 1676. Louis Bevier (who was possibly related to the Hasbroucks) and his wife Marie LeBlanc also immigrated to America in 1675; they were in Ulster County by 1678. Other French-speaking Protestant émigrés likewise established homes in the Kingston area, although they did not join themselves to the families who would soon found New Paltz.

### Establishing New Paltz

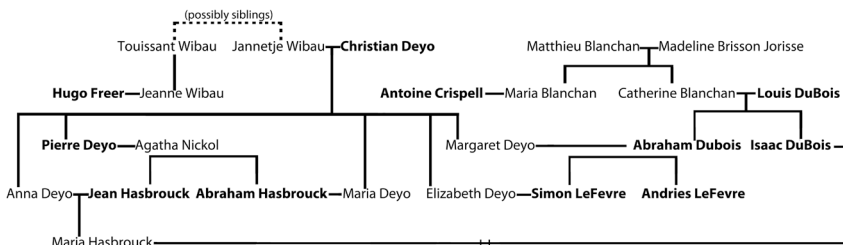
The Blanchan, DuBois, and Crispell group were soon joined in Hurley by the Deyo, LeFevre, and Hasbrouck families, who also received land in the village. These families were apparently not satisfied with the quantity of land available to them in Hurley or Kingston, so this developing kin network looked to acquire additional land nearby, an endeavor which also attracted the Bevier and Freer families. Like Louis DuBois, Abraham Hasbrouck had been appointed a local magistrate by the provincial government; it is possible that they used their provincial connections in pursuit of their goal, which

ultimately resulted in the creation of the village of New Paltz. That village began its life on May 26, 1677, when nine interrelated Walloon heads-of-families and the two sons of their leader, Louis DuBois, joined together to purchase from Native Americans of the Esopus tribe nearly forty thousand acres of land on the west side of the Hudson River, land that would ultimately become part of Ulster County in 1683 (see table 1.1).

This considerable plot of land was located approximately fifteen miles from what became the county seat (Kingston), on the edges of European-settled territory. In the following September, Governor Edmund Andros granted a land patent to these “partners,” as designated in the patent, which included not only the purchasers as stated in the “Indian Deed,” but the recently arrived Louis Bevier as well. These twelve men became the New Paltz patentees.<sup>12</sup>

Without a doubt, land, and thus economic opportunity, is what motivated the New Paltz founders to acquire a patent on the edge of European settlement. This is particularly clear for the Blanchan-DuBois-Crispell group, who were concerned not for their own but their children’s future needs. One of the patentees Antoine Crispell never even moved to New Paltz, remaining in Hurley until his death in 1707, with his lands in New Paltz descending to a number of his heirs who had moved there. Patentee Louis DuBois did relocate to New Paltz, but only temporarily, returning to Hurley after he placed the new village and his sons on a sure footing. That land was on their minds is further reinforced by the fact that Matthieu Blanchan, the patriarch of the clan, did not even join in the New Paltz project, as he apparently felt

**Table 1.1.** Genealogical connections of the New Paltz patentees



**Louis Bevier**—Maria LeBlanc  
(Bever was possibly the cousin of the Hasbrouck brothers)

\*Patentees in **Bold**  
#Dotted lines represent possible genealogical connections

**Patentee marriage dates and place of residence**  
Christian Deyo and Jannetje Wibau, Spanish Netherlands  
Louis DuBois and Catherine Blanchan, 1655, Germany  
Antoine Crispell and Maria Blanchan, 1660, Germany  
Hugo Freer and Jeanne Wibau (second wife), Germany  
Jean Hasbrouck and Anna Deyo, 1663, Germany  
Louis Bevier and Maria LeBlanc, Germany  
Pierre Deyo and Agathe Nickol, 1675, Germany  
Abraham Hasbrouck and Maria Deyo, 1675, New York  
Simon LeFevre and Elizabeth Deyo, 1676, New York  
Abraham DuBois and Margaret Deyo, 1681, New York  
Isaac DuBois and Maria Hasbrouck, 1683, New York



that he had sufficient land already. When the patent was acquired, all four of his daughters were married; he therefore needed to provide for only one son, and the patriarchal lands in Hurley were certainly sufficient for that. The acquisitiveness of the patentees is also reflected in the fact that some, including Abraham Hasbrouck, Hugo Freer, and Abraham DuBois, were not even satisfied with a one-twelfth share of nearly forty thousand acres. They continued to acquire substantially more land beyond New Paltz, upon which they settled some of their children. The patentee Abraham DuBois even acquired land in New Jersey, which he later bequeathed to his eldest son.<sup>13</sup>

It is not surprising that the New Paltz project involved families joined by ethnic culture and religion, even though the endeavor was primarily economic, as the creation of such linkages was typical among continental ethno-cultural groups. As J. F. Boshier argues, Huguenots often engaged in economic activities with other Huguenots, as doing so supported an “atmosphere of personal trust based on a common religion.” He clearly sees this among seventeenth-century Huguenot merchants, who formed a “Protestant international” in which “family life, and religion were interdependent.” Susanah Shaw Romney likewise discusses how trade in the Dutch Atlantic world was supported by “intimate” family networks that facilitated economic relationships. While New Paltz was structured around land rather than trade, the same level of trust could reasonably be seen as desirable among a group of families engaged in a landholding partnership.<sup>14</sup>

While the establishment of new homes and farms on the edge of European settlement brought the patentees economic gains, moving beyond existing communities presented new cultural challenges. This was particularly so in the spiritual realm, as life on the frontier made it difficult for them to formally practice their religion. Since migrating to the Esopus region, the founding families of New Paltz had attended services and received the religious rites in the Dutch Reformed Church of Wiltwijck/Kingston, as they lacked a Walloon or French minister necessary for the establishment of an independent French-speaking congregation. Establishing New Paltz did not change that situation, but it did increase their distance from Kingston, making it even more challenging for the founding families to participate in church rituals and receive the edification they believed only a trained Calvinist minister could provide. They were still willing to travel in order to receive essential religious rites that required an ordained minister, especially baptism, but they nevertheless reduced their regular attendance in the Dutch church in Kingston. Instead, trusted men within the community read printed sermons in the French language to a gathered assembly. As a Calvinistic worship service was primarily structured around preaching, surely the reading of printed sermons did not provide particularly rewarding experiences. Apparently the patentees’ desire for land outweighed their need for a deeper religious experience that a formally gathered congregation could offer.<sup>15</sup>

The primary reason that the patentee families could not establish their own congregation in New Paltz is that there were no Walloon or Huguenot ministers in the mainland British colonies at the time of the village’s founding. Neither could they have anticipated that such a minister would ever



become available. They therefore could not have presumed at the time of the founding that their independent control of the village could ever be translated into ecclesiastical independence. However, serendipity rather than design did enable them to establish their own independent congregation after a few French-speaking ministers immigrated to the American colonies in the early 1680s in response to growing persecution in France, which culminated in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. This unexpected immigration enabled New Paltz in 1683 to secure the services of a Huguenot minister, Pierre Daillé, which allowed for the formation of a congregation and its local governing body—the consistory—composed of the minister as well as elder(s) and deacon(s) selected from the congregation. Daillé served the congregation only until 1692, after which four years passed before they could acquire the services of another French-speaking pastor, David de Bonrepos, in 1696. He, too, served the New Paltz church only for a short time, leaving for other duties in 1700. The congregation never again secured the ministrations of another Walloon or Huguenot minister.

Even when the congregation was being served by Daillé and de Bonrepos, their ministers visited New Paltz only two to three times a year, when they preached the Word and baptized children of the New Paltz families. At all other times, local services still involved the reading of printed religious texts. The congregation also continued to rely on the Kingston church for most baptisms and for the Lord's Supper. While the patentee families apparently believed that a local congregation was desirable, creating one when the opportunity presented itself, they had initially believed that placing themselves far from the regular ministrations of a pastor and a consistory was a price worth paying in order to acquire a vast quantity of land.<sup>16</sup>

### Governing New Paltz

The church was not the only institution that the founders created that bound themselves and their families together, as the patent stipulated that they establish a local government. Necessity also required them to create an institutional mechanism for managing joint ownership of that patent. Both were structured according to English colonial law, such that the patentees' shared Walloonness had no impact on how they might govern themselves. Still, while power was organized according to the English colonial government and its laws, local power was primarily held by the proprietors of the patent and their descendants throughout the long eighteenth century. Even when men from outside of the patentee families served in any institutional capacity, it was because members of the patentee community allowed them into their circle. In other words, English law defined the local government, but the patentee families controlled it on the ground. Institutional power was divided between provincial rule and local control, but that division was stable, predictable, and unthreatening, keeping at bay any actual, perceived, or threatened ethnocultural threat or pressure. The New Paltz founder families were simply not victims of "ethnic aggression."

In granting the patent, the English colonial government gave more than land to the patentees, as it created a new governmental jurisdiction that had to be organized according to English political and judicial structures. Governor Edmund Andros stipulated in the patent “that the plantacons which shall bee settled upon the said piece of land bee a Township.” As a township, New Paltz had rights established in the Duke’s Laws, including the right to elect four overseers and a constable. These officers possessed legislative authority for “the well Ordering [of] their Affairs, as the disposing, Planting, Building and the like, of their owne Lands and woods, granting of Lotts, Election of Officers, Assessing of Rates with many other matters of a prudentiall Nature, tending to the Peace and geod Government.” They had the “power to Ordaine such or so many peculier Constitutions as are Necessary to the welfare and Improvement of their Towne; Provided they bee not of a Criminal Nature, And that the Penalties Exceed not Twenty Shillings for one Offence.” The “Towne Court,” in which the constable and overseers exercised their legally constituted power, also held limited legal jurisdiction as the lowest level of justice, meeting once every two, three, or four weeks, as they saw fit. Although there are no records that reveal whether the New Paltz patentees elected constables and overseers in the first years of the town’s history, if they did, all town officers would have been New Paltz patentees, as in its early years, the patentee families comprised the entire town.<sup>17</sup>

Local government began to change soon after the village’s founding when the provincial assembly created counties in 1683. New Paltz was located in what became Ulster County. In the same 1683 legislative session, the assembly also passed a law to “settle Courts of Justice” for each of the counties. Each county court was to be administered by a minimum of three appointed justices of the peace, although town courts were retained at the lowest level of justice. The assembly also enacted a law “for the Defraying of the publique & necessary Charge of each respective City, towne and County throughout this Province & for maintaining the poore, & preventing vagabonds.” This law discontinued the use of overseers and required the electing of a new spate of town officers to assess and collect rates—an assessor and a treasurer—as well as the appointment of a supervisor to manage “publique affairs.” The 1683 legislation was revised in 1691, but that second law was confusing and ambiguous. The assembly therefore passed a further revised statute in 1703, which remained unchanged throughout the remainder of the colonial period. That 1703 law required the “ffreeholders and Inhabitants” of towns such as New Paltz to elect a supervisor, two assessors and a collector on the first Tuesday of every April.<sup>18</sup>

The positions of supervisor, assessor, and collector did not exhaust the elected offices in colonial New York, as constables continued to be elected. In 1691, each town was also given the right to elect three surveyors empowered to regulate highways and fences, “with such orders to be recorded in the ‘Towns book.’” Such a law was passed as towns “are soe Circumstanced as to have different and distinct wayes in their Improvements of Tillage and Pasturage.” The assembly later separated the oversight of highways and fences, creating two separate offices, that of fenceviewers and overseers (or surveyors)

of the highways. The final elected position that New Paltz voters were allowed to choose in the eighteenth century was the overseer of the poor, although when precisely such officials were first chosen is not precisely known.<sup>19</sup>

Due to the sparseness of early records, it is not clear exactly when New Paltz began to elect officers in accordance with English colonial law, but it is certain that New Paltz had a functioning town government designed according to provincial legislation at least as early as 1702. Such a government was the only government the colonial community ever possessed. In 1728, they did create another standing institution—the “Twelve Men” or the “Duzine” (based on either the French or Dutch word for “dozen”)—that has sometimes been seen as the village’s government. If it was, it was a unique form of government, as no institution identical to the Duzine was created in any other New York town. This fact encouraged nineteenth-century descendants and others to conclude that it was designed so as to allow for the autonomy of the Walloon community, an idea that still resonates among descendants today. In reality, the institution of the Twelve Men in no way had judicial or legislative authority within the town, as has been claimed, but merely provided a mechanism for managing and protecting what began as a jointly owned land grant in a manner inspired by English colonial law. Simply put, the basic form of the Duzine was not the brainchild of the Walloon New Paltz patentees nor their immediate heirs.<sup>20</sup>

Such an institution as the Duzine was required in New Paltz because of the vagaries of the laws related to joint ownership of land patents, which made their management quite problematic. One legal issue concerned how jointly owned land could be divided after the original patentees had died. In 1708, the province enacted legislation to allow for such division, but it remained in effect only through 1721 (with limited lapses in 1715 and 1718). A new law concerning the division of land was enacted in 1726, but it was repealed by the king on February 15, 1728, leaving the heirs of the New Paltz patentees without a legal means of dividing the undivided land in the patent. With the repeal of the 1726 law, neither did New Yorkers anywhere have a means of legally protecting the boundaries of patents, which, according to that law, were sometimes “incroached upon by others.”<sup>21</sup>

During the lifetimes of the patentees, the patentees presumably managed the patent themselves, but questions must have arisen among the heirs as to how to divide the land and protect its boundaries as their numbers continued to grow while the number of surviving patentees shrank. They might have looked to provincial legislation, but after the king disallowed the 1726 law, they were left without efficient legal options. Nevertheless, when the number of living patentees had been reduced to one, he and the many heirs of the patentees chose to look to the previous provincial laws for guidance. In 1728, nearly fifty years after the founding of the town, patentee Abraham DuBois and the heirs formally decided that the patent would henceforth be managed by an elected body of twelve administrators, with each member representing the real property interests of the heirs of one of the patentees. The representatives chosen to serve as members of the Twelve Men were to be elected on the first Tuesday in April, which was the same day that the election of town

officials was legally mandated. While the election of town officials was open to all “freeholders and Inhabitants,” the election of the Duzine was open exclusively to those “owners and occupiers [who] hath a Right In each of the aforesaid Pattent[ee]s Shares.” The number of New Paltz men unrelated to the patentee descendants by birth or marriage was small when the Duzine was created, but there were some in the community who had the right to elect town officials but not members of the Duzine. As the town grew throughout the eighteenth century through the in-migration of individuals unrelated to the patentee families, this gap continued to widen, reflecting the fact that the institutions were essentially separate.<sup>22</sup>

The threefold and limited purpose of the institution of the Twelve Men was to protect the legal title to the full patent, to confirm the divisions of the patent that had been previously made without legal deeds, and to divide the undivided land when they deemed fit and necessary. While all three issues were of considerable import, the last is most significant in terms of affairs within the community. According to the contract, when the Duzine determined that it was desirable or necessary to divide previously undivided portions of the patent, such land was to be laid out and distributed “in Twelve Equal Shares and Devisions soe that the one is not of more Vallue than the other and Then the aforesaid Twelve Shares or Devisions shall be numbered and then the aforesaid Twelve men shall Draw Lotts for the same and such Share or Division as falls to the Lotts of the aforesaid Twelve men Respectively.” How each of the Twelve Men subsequently distributed the one-twelfth portion among those who had inherited any legal right to segments of that allotment is not known.<sup>23</sup>

While the founders did create a somewhat-isolated, ethnically homogeneous village, differentiated from both the Dutch in the immediate area and the English who controlled the colonial government, they simply could not, from a legal standpoint, have isolated themselves as a distinct people, just as they could not have initially separated themselves from the religious life of the region. It was simply impossible to be strictly local or strictly Walloon in a Dutch cultural region in an English colony, even if they had wanted to pursue such a goal. Having their own village did give the patentees political power, as well as ownership and control of a considerable expanse of land, but that power could not facilitate the expression of Walloon culture from either a legal or political perspective.

### **The Coming of Outsiders**

Nevertheless, the patentees’ ownership of all of the village’s land, which then descended to the children, did profoundly affect ethnic relations within the community. As they controlled all access to the village’s natural resources, and hence its wealth, so too did they control access to the town’s government, its church, and its families, and they did so throughout the long eighteenth century. Whether the village remained ethnically homogeneous or incorporated those whose ethnocultural heritage was different from that of the founders was entirely within their hands. They were able to choose between

endogamy and exogamy, and they had the option to restrict land ownership and use to members of their ethnic group, if they so chose. Ultimately, they did not. Neither did they turn in upon themselves in order to preserve a restrictive Walloon congregation, even though their church potentially could have been the strongest anchor of ethnic distinctiveness, if such distinctiveness was desired. They had no need to isolate themselves as Walloons because they controlled how other ethnic groups were allowed to join into the life of the community, a fact which continued to color ethnocultural relations and strategies throughout the long eighteenth century.

A primary way in which the lack of isolationism can be seen is through marriage patterns. Marriage patterns, however, do not incontrovertibly reveal acceptance of those of non-Walloon ancestry into the patentee *community*, as it was not a communal decision to pursue exogamous unions but rather a personal or, at the highest level, a family decision. Nevertheless, it is clear that a stigma was never attached to exogamy between a Walloon and a person of "Dutch" ancestry, and later between such a person and someone of British birth or descent.

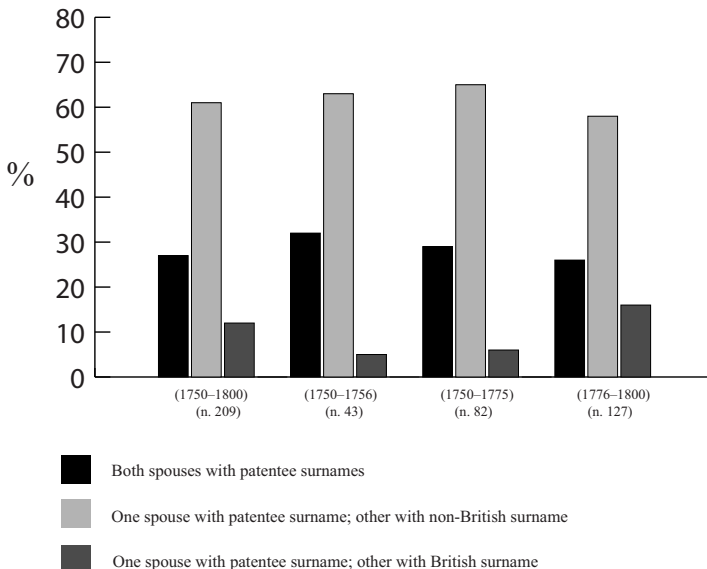
The local "Dutch" and the Walloons in New Paltz joined together very early on in the history of the community. Of course, exogamy between Walloons and "Dutch" might have been influenced to some extent by the limited number of eligible French-speaking spouses in the region. However, there were additional possibilities for endogamous marriages that were not pursued, as the patentee families certainly did not comprise the full extent of Walloon or French families in the county. This web of ethnic intertwining began to develop as early as the second generation, resulting in a full incorporation, and practically an amalgamation, of the non-British ethnicities in the families of the New Paltz patentees. For example, three of patentee Pierre Deyo's four children married "Dutch" individuals. The cultural affiliation of the spouse of the remaining son is unclear, as her surname was recorded in both French (LeConte) and Dutch (deGraff). Of the six children of patentee Louis DuBois and his wife Catherine who were not patentees themselves, five married those of "Dutch" descent, while only one married a member of a patentee family. The children of other patentees did not contract marriages to those of "Dutch" descent to such a high degree. For example, two of Louis Bevier's children married those of pure Walloon background, one of full Dutch ancestry, and two of mixed French/Walloon and Dutch heritage. Similarly, of patentee Abraham Hasbrouck and his wife Maria Deyos's children, one married a person of Walloon background, two married within the "Dutch" families, and two married individuals of mixed French/Walloon and Dutch heritage. The fact that those of Walloon heritage did not shun "Dutch" marriage partners is not particularly surprising, as the Nieuw Nederland/New York Dutch generally accepted and incorporated into their society those of many continental ethnicities. This would have been particularly easy for Walloons and the Dutch, as they shared the Reformed religion.<sup>24</sup>

Marriage patterns become somewhat more opaque over time, as the intermarrying of people of multiple ethnicities makes it difficult to assign a particular ethnicity or ethnocultural orientation to most individuals. Nev-

ertheless, the heirs of the patentees first incorporated the “Dutch” into the community through marriage, and less so but increasingly the British as well, as an analysis based on surnames reveals, even though there was no demographic pressure to do so. Between 1750 and 1800, 216 unions in which both of the spouses’ birth surnames are known were recorded in the church records either through a marriage or the baptism of a child, of which 209 are useful for analysis. Over the course of the entire period, about one-quarter of those marriages were between a man and woman both with patentee surnames, and three-fifths between a person with a patentee surname and a person with a non-British surname, which in general means someone who had likely assimilated into the New York “Dutch” population. About only one in eight of the marriages involved one member with a British surname, basically divided between men and women. Over the course of the period, however, the number of marriages between a person with a patentee surname and a person with a British surname noticeably increased, particularly in the last quarter of the century (see table 1.2). Everyone in the community might not have been equally supportive of marrying outside of the traditional ethnic pool—the evidence is silent on this point—but when it came to seeking out a marriage partner, many individuals felt comfortable expanding their ethnic horizons to include Anglo-Americans.<sup>25</sup>

Marriage was not the only way that eighteenth-century descendants of the patentees allowed those of British birth or descent into their daily lives, as they also allowed them to share in the rites of their church, including baptism. Again, while it is impossible to determine the ethnic heritage of all who were married or had children baptized in the congregation, a host of surnames

**Table 1.2.** Marriage patterns, 1750–1800



that suggest British ancestry appeared in the records. Many men were married to women of non-British ancestry, such that the continental ethnic heritage of their spouses might have led to the participation in the religious community. However, there were also marriages between individuals both of whom had British surnames, suggesting that the doors and the rites of the church were not closed even to those that may have lacked strong “Dutch” connections. This may not be much of surprise, given that at least some of the British people may have shared a Calvinistic faith with the non-British residents of New Paltz. Even if they did not, the services of no other ministers were available in the community, such that ministers of other denominations might have had to suffice. Nevertheless, it is clear that patentee descendants did not follow ethnically exclusionary practices within their congregation, the primary institutional anchor of their ethnocultural heritage.<sup>26</sup>

A primary reason that they did not restrict what the church could offer those without strong patentee family connections is that they controlled access to deeper engagement with the church through membership and service in the consistory. While 432 individuals baptized a child and/or were married in the church between 1750 and 1800, only 249 became members. Of the 101 of the 124 female members for which maiden names can be determined with certainty, only seven had British birth names, but six of these seven all had strong non-British connections. Only Elizabeth Wood, a young unmarried woman who became a member during the Great Awakening, lacked a solid non-British connection. Of the 125 male members, only eight clearly had British names, most of whom had patentee/“Dutch” connections. Again, only one man, Daniel Graham, did not have any clear “Dutch” connections that can be determined. In short, only two British individuals lacking clear non-British connections became institutionally connected to the community through church membership.<sup>27</sup>

Not surprisingly, holding an office in the church was an even more exclusive honor than membership. Of the 239 times New Paltz men were chosen to serve as elders and deacons between 1731 and 1800, just over three-quarters had patentee names, and many chosen served more than once. Other than Daniel Graham (deacon, 1778), Johannes York (deacon, 1797 and 1799), whose mother was a patentee descendant, and perhaps Hendric Smitt, (deacon, 1792 and 1794) whose ethnicity cannot be determined, the remainder of the church officers all had non-British surnames.<sup>28</sup>

A more common way that the descendants of the founders allowed those of British birth or ancestry into their midst was by permitting them access to land. Again, they apparently did not shrink from doing so because they were able to keep British newcomers on the margins, both geographically and economically, as the surviving tax lists demonstrate. This trend did not begin immediately, although nothing suggests that the slow start was the result of intentional design. The earliest list, from 1712, includes the assessments of twenty-two property owners, three-quarters of whom represented six of the seven New Paltz patentee families. The seventh, Antoine Crispell, was represented by his daughter, Lysbeth, the spouse of Elias Ean, who was likely of Dutch ancestry. A few other men of Dutch ancestry had also entered the



community by that time through their marriages to women from patentee families. In total, approximately 90 percent of the New Paltz residents in 1712 belonged to the founding families by birth or marriage, with twenty heads of household holding virtually all of the wealth. There were two additional men in the community without any obvious connections to the founding families, but as they were of Dutch background, they would not have been isolated from the patentee community because of their ethnic heritage. Not much had changed by 1728, the year of the next surviving tax list, when 90 percent of the taxables were members of the community established by the founding families, by birth, marriage, or ethnocultural heritage. Again, this group held virtually all of the community's wealth.<sup>29</sup>

The next surviving tax list, that of 1765, however, reveals a pronounced change in the ethnic demographics of the village. Still, economic power remained in the hands of patentee descendants. Of the 112 individuals taxed, about one-half had patentee surnames. Another thirteen men with Dutch surnames were also members of the patentee families, as they or their fathers had married women descended from the founders. Four more "Dutch" men with long New Paltz connections from the Vandermark and Schoonmaker families can also be included in the patentee orbit, as well as three other "Dutch" newcomers who had no direct connections with the founding families. The patentee circle also embraced a few newcomers not of Walloon or Dutch ancestry, including Rev. Johannes Mauritius Goetschius (of Swiss birth), Joseph Coddington (of Anglo-American heritage), and the brothers Christian and David Auchmoody (of Scottish heritage). Goetschius and Coddington served the patentee community by providing religious and educational services, and the Auchmoody brothers were the sons of James Auchmoody and patentee descendant Maria Deyo. Together, the patentee circle consisted of about two-thirds of the taxables, rather than in the 90 percent range as before. Nevertheless, the patentee circle continued to hold most of the assessed wealth (95 percent). The decline in the patentee circle as a proportion of the entire population between 1728 and 1765 may have been over 20 percent, but the economic power of the group remained essentially unchanged.<sup>30</sup>

The remaining thirty-six individuals enumerated in the 1765 tax list represented thirty-four different family names with no discernible connections to the patentee family group by birth or marriage. Most of these newcomers were both poor and transient, such that they were relatively disconnected from members of the intertwined patentee circle. The one-third of the total New Paltz households included in the "new" group were assessed for only about 5 percent of the wealth, and if the one individual in this "new" group of significant wealth is removed (Abraham Donaldson), that percentage is reduced to 4 percent. In fact, six individuals in the patentee group were each worth more than the total "new" group combined (less Abraham Donaldson). The ethnic origin of all of the names is not entirely clear, but many were clearly of British extraction. Others suggest a Germanic background or French or Walloon ancestry.<sup>31</sup>

These newcomers lived in a clearly defined neighborhood, one which had only been recently settled and which consisted primarily of relatively poor

land. As a result, not only did they live on the socioeconomic margins of the community but the geographic margins as well. For most of the first hundred years, the patentee families and their descendants had congregated on the fertile flats along the western portion of the patent near the Wallkill River. They continued to hold almost the whole eastern side of the patent from the Wallkill to the Hudson in common, not needing it for agriculture. In 1745, they divided the land directly along the Hudson River, but it does not appear that this land was settled until somewhat later. In 1763 they surveyed and divided the swampy and hilly section of the patent between the older settlement and the lots abutting the Hudson River, in what they termed the "new division." This area was soon settled, as the patentee families leased or sold many of their portions to others. Apparently, the motivation to divide commonly held land was not land pressure that forced the descendants of the founders to farm the less desirable portion of their land, but the desire to profit financially from what had formerly served as the commons. It is on these lands that the newcomers settled, some apparently for only a short time. Thus, given the newcomers' overall transience, the geographic separation of their farms from the bulk of those traditionally tied to the community, and their low socioeconomic position, the fact that a not-insignificant number of such newcomers were of British backgrounds likely had little immediate impact on those village residents traditionally of a non-British orientation. Perhaps some of these newcomers portended the spread of English culture to the old village residents as the way of the future, but the village middling and elite certainly would not have felt any meaningful cultural pressure from those who lived on the geographic and socioeconomic edges of the village community.<sup>32</sup>

The ethnic and socioeconomic makeup of the community faced even more dramatic changes over the course of the next thirty years, although members of the patentee community clearly continued to dominate socioeconomically. In 1798, when the Federal Direct Tax schedules were prepared, the proportion of the patentee community in relation to the "newcomers" completely reversed that proportion as it had been in 1765. At most, the patentee group accounted for only just over one-third of the taxables, whereas in 1765 they had comprised approximately two-thirds. Of the many "newcomers," only about one in seven of which had last names that could be found in the village just over thirty years earlier, only a few could be considered "Dutch." However, an impressive number had names of English origin. Even if just the names beginning with B (Baker, Barber, Barns, Barret, Bedford, Benton, Bosworth, Brannen, Brown, Budd, Burnet, Bush) or S (Sammons, Seaman, Shearwood, Simmon, Sloan, Smith, Stanton, Star, Stephens, Stokes) are considered, the English influx is evident. The sheer number of names in 1798 that had not been represented in New Paltz in 1765 was staggering—166—as compared to only twenty-six surnames in the patentee group. Of the new names, about three-quarters were represented only once in 1798, which suggests that many of the newcomers were unmarried, had relatively young families, or did not have sons who could choose or had chosen to settle in New Paltz. The social structure in 1798 was also different than it had been

in 1765. While two-thirds of the patentee group owned or leased houses valued at least at one hundred dollars, so too did just under a third of the newcomers. One-tenth of the newcomers even owned or leased houses worth \$300; still, their numbers were fewer than the nearly half of the patentee group who did so as well. Nevertheless, the newcomers were not by definition all poor, as had been the case in 1765, but they were still clearly of a lower social position.<sup>33</sup>

Importantly, the patentee families were entirely responsible for the diversification of their community. The willingness of the landowners of the patentee group to lease and, even more significantly, to sell some of their lands to “strangers” had made this ethnic diversification possible. That they chose to do so suggests that the patentee group did not attempt to isolate itself from the English. One element that made this influx of newcomers acceptable, of course, was that the patentee group maintained its economic dominance, especially so as of 1765 although somewhat decreasingly by 1798. Nevertheless, even by 1798, the elite was still primarily composed of members of the patentee family group. As such, this ethnic diversification would not have appeared as a threat as it might have in places such as seventeenth-century New York City, where many Dutch indeed may have felt culturally threatened.

Even if the collective wealth of the patentee community declined proportionally relative to that of the newcomers, the patentee community retained all the reins of local political power, as the interrelated men of such families collectively formed an unchallengeable block. Thus, selling or renting land to newcomers of British birth or descent did not have the potential to undermine the authority of the patentee families. This is not to say that no one outside of the patentee circle served in political office. However, those that did so served in low-level positions, positions which existed only because the patentee men had created them.

Election records are scant for the first half of the eighteenth century, but they are extant from 1751–1766, except for one year. These records are particularly valuable because they span the period both before and after the 1763 “new division” of land to the east of the core of the New Paltz settlement, as that pivotal division was what resulted in the creation of a substantially British neighborhood between the original settlement and the Hudson River. From 1751 through 1759, virtually all elected officials, and even nominees, possessed patentee surnames or had intermarried with patentee families. Only four were not of the patentee circle. Beginning in 1760, however, some of the “new” group were nominated and elected to serve, but only for lower ranking positions, such as fenceviewer, pound master, constable, and surveyor of the highways. Individuals of the patentee group served in lower-status positions as well, but the higher offices—supervisor, collector, assessor, and overseer of the poor—were filled by men from only the patentee group. Importantly, higher offices were restricted to a particular number each year (one supervisor, one collector, and two assessors), while the town had the discretion to create as many of the lower positions as it saw fit. The village’s leaders did expand the number of positions in the lower offices because the

town had developed into two neighborhoods, the “paltz” side and the “river” side (as indicated in the election records); and they wanted the newcomers who lived on the “river” side of the town to be able to monitor themselves. The patentee families did not, however, allow newcomers to lead the government of the town as a whole. This again suggests that the newcomers impacted the ensconced families in only a minor fashion. If these British newcomers had been seen as a threat, the patentee families certainly might have resisted the British influx into the community, which had necessitated the incorporation of newcomers into the government. They did not.<sup>34</sup>

A snapshot view of a later period—the 1790s—reveals that the pool from which town officers were drawn had expanded to include more individuals from outside the patentee group, and in slightly higher capacities. Nevertheless, members of the patentee group still dominated, as they served as officers in numbers far outweighing their representation in the community. In the first half of the decade, one in four of those elected to serve in high office was not from the patentee group, a type of service that had not been possible for them in the 1760s. Nevertheless, the highest offices—supervisor and clerk—were still filled only by members of the patentee group. Of the seven newcomers who served, however, the highest office that five achieved was overseer of the poor, with only one of those five serving more than once. As for the other two, Peleg Ransom served four times as assessor and Jonathan Preslar as overseer of the poor (once), collector (twice), and assessor (twice). Ransom and Preslar were distinctive in serving so many times; from 1790–1795, no one else, including members of the patentee group, served in as many offices as Preslar and no one repeatedly served in the same office as did Ransom. In other words, members of the patentee group seem almost to have been seen as interchangeable, while only a couple of newcomers reached the inner circles of government, which again suggests that the power of the newcomers remained thin enough not to have presented any threat to the patentee circle.<sup>35</sup>

The peripatetic families of the founders of New Paltz were both fleeing material hardships and searching for economic opportunities. They, as Protestant, French-speaking Walloons, did form expatriate communities when possible, but their ability to protect and preserve their culture was not what fundamentally motivated them as they migrated through Europe and America. At least it was not their first priority. Had it been, the founders would likely have never left the Palatinate, as there they had successfully established a Walloon enclave. Of course, the Palatinate had become a physically dangerous place to live, but the New World was not particularly safe either. Whether they could establish a Walloon community in the New World would have been far from certain, as they migrated in small groups into either a Dutch colony or, after the conquest, a Dutch cultural region in an English colony. The first group to arrive—the Blanchan-DuBois-Crispell family group—could hardly have thought that they could protect and preserve a living Walloon culture by themselves, and theirs was not the beginning of an organized chain migration. For all they knew, they would remain relatively alone in the midst of the “Dutch” of Nieuw Nederland. Once in America,

they and some of those Walloons who arrived soon after did begin to form a community in Hurley, and when they sought more land, united in their efforts to acquire it. Doing so, however, was primarily linked to a sense of trust grounded in family relationships and their shared language and religion. They did not join together to create an independent Walloon community. That was simply impossible, as they were required to structure their village as an Anglo-American town according to Anglo-American laws. It was also impossible to establish an independent Walloon congregation when the town was founded. They did create one when they could, but they were not prescient. They did not know they would ever be able to do so, such that the possibility of creating a Walloon congregation could not have inspired their actions either.

It is true that Dutch and English culture were forced upon the founders and their descendants in one way or another. But as much as it was forced upon them, they never responded by isolating themselves from either Dutch or English people, even to the extent that they could. This should not be overly surprising, especially when considering the founders themselves, as only people who were culturally flexible could have managed the challenges they faced as they moved through Europe and America. Of course, their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren may not by definition have embraced the flexibility of the founders. Yet they did as well, at least for the most part. Many of the founders' children reached out to "Dutch" partners, even though a greater number of endogamous unions was theoretically possible. Some of the generations that followed even married those of British heritage. They also allowed British people to share in the rites of the church, to buy or rent land in the town, and even to serve in government. Still, while intermarriage led to the integration of the Walloons into the "Dutch," they most often accepted British people into their midst by keeping them on the margins. British people held provincial power, but the local power of the founding families remained unchallenged because of their control of the town's lands. In other words, while the founding families began as an ethnic minority, they never became an embattled minority, as they had complete control over how those of other ethnic backgrounds would be allowed into their community. Their position was therefore nothing like that of the Albany Dutch, who struggled against the English-dominated provincial government. Neither were they in the position of the French or Dutch of New York City who might have faced marginalization if they had not culturally adapted to being in an English colony, at least to some extent. Interethnic interaction was therefore far from monolithic in ethnically heterogeneous New York.

Allowing, and sometimes even accepting, those of different ethnocultural heritage into their community did not necessarily mean that the founders and the descendants were willing to integrate or accept their culture. Yet, they actively and willingly did that as well, and it was fundamentally because they possessed so much local power that they could feel comfortable adopting and/or adapting the multiple ethnocultural vocabularies available to them. As we see in the following three chapters, they did so by creating a constantly shifting creolized culture in which their power was clear but in which ethnocultural "ambiguity restlessly rule[d]."<sup>36</sup>