



Bergen County, Where America Begins

ZABRISKIE FAMILY HISTORY

Part One

by Kevin Wright

As with any good mystery, the scant facts of the case yield more heat than light. Upon his own testimony, the marriage registry at Bergen listed Albert Zabriskie's birthplace as "Enghestburgh." Yet no such place is known to researchers; some favoring Engelsberg in Austrian Silesia and others Angerburg or Insterburg in East Prussia. The surname, however, possibly derives from Zborowiska or Zabrze, a Silesian town on the west bank of the Prosna River. Since Albert Zabriskie was Lutheran, his family may have been displaced by religious wars that swept central Europe. From his age at the time of his death, we calculate that he was born about the year 1638.

The curious name of the man with obscure origins appeared upon the passenger list of D'Vos (The Fox), which arrived in New Amsterdam on August 31, 1662, where is recorded "Albert Saboriski, from Prussia." Twenty-four years old when he disembarked (seemingly alone) in New Netherland, he is lost to history for a dozen years thereafter. He surfaces again from obscurity in 1675, when Albert Zaborowsky was reported trading with the Tappans, notably Mamshier, their sachem, and Metetoch and Chechepowas, whereby these headmen became indebted to him. At thirty-eight years of age, he married Machtelt Van der Linden, a maiden but sixteen years old, on December 17, 1676. On October 11, 1680, the clerk of the Bergen Dutch Reformed Church noted that Machtelt, wife of Albert Sabarosky, had returned to the Lutheran faith which she had formerly forsaken.

On July 15, 1679, Albert Saboroscoe acted as interpreter with the native owners in the purchase of Aschacking, "near Warepeck and a run of water commonly called Tantaquaes Creeke," a tract of land at the head of New Barbadoes Neck, that extended northwest "unto Sadle river..." He attempted to purchase land in this neighborhood and on April 12, 1682, was issued a survey for 380 acres lying upon the Hackingsack River. He got a patent for 444 acres along the Hackensack River

and Tantaque Brook (now Cole's Brook) on March 25, 1683, but when surveys were finally drawn, only 224 acres of this amount could be found unclaimed by others. Albert Saberasky witnessed the purchase of land in the northern Hackensack valley and along Peskeckie Creek, conveyed by Tappan sachem Memsha⁹, Mettatoch and Seytheypoe to the East Jersey Proprietors on October 16, 1684.

Back on January 6, 1676, Laurence Andriessen (Van Buskirk) & Company had purchased "a tract of land called by the name of New Hackensack, bounded on Olde Hackensack and from thence running to a small kill or vale [later known as French Creek] adjoining to the Great Indian field called the Indian Castle to the northward" from the Hackensack sachem Tantaque. It was subdivided into strips of land extending between the Hackensack River and the west branch of Overpeck Creek. On March 25, 1685, the East Jersey Proprietors conveyed 183 acres "upon the New Plantations upon the Hackensack River called by the name of New Hackinsack" to Albert Sabboresco of Bergen, planter. This tract was bounded southeast by the west branch of Overpeck Creek (now called Teaneck Creek) and northwest by the Hackensack River. Here he made his home. A year or so later, Albert Saberiscoe (with the Indian alias Totlock) witnessed the sale by several Hackensack and Tappan sachems of a parcel of land "adjoining unto Captane Sandford's bounds upwards pasaick River five rods beyond a run of water called by the Indians Warepeake, but the right name of the said run is Rerakanes & by the English named Sadle River," made November 29, 1686¹⁴.

On January 5, 1686, Governor Gawen Lawrie (on behalf of Peter Sonmans) received a patent for three parcels of land on the west bank of the Hackensack River in what is now Oradell and River Edge: one tract of 1,520 acres; another of 643 acres; and a third of 261 acres.¹⁵ On September 1, 1686, the East Jersey Proprietors conveyed two adjacent tracts of land to Albert Saberiscoe (Zabriskie): the first was described as 330 acres "called Coovange the Indian's land," extending between the Hackensack and Saddle Rivers, bounded north by land of Daniel River (the boundary line running along what is now Adams Avenue in River Edge) and south by his own land; the second tract of 250 acres also extended from the Hackensack River to the Saddle River, and was bounded south by land of Peter Sonmans and north by his own land. The deed survey for the southern tract began at two marked red oaks and a walnut tree, standing "by the path" (now Kinderkamack Road) at the point where Kinderkamack Road and Jackson Avenue presently intersect. From here, the property extended southwest along the river and then about three miles northwest to the Saddle River. Today, Manning Avenue in River Edge runs along the southwest limit of this tract. On September 4, 1686, Albert Saberiscoe of Bergen deeded 450 acres, comprising the eastern side of these lands, to Richard Pope of Hackinsack. The portion conveyed extended from the

Hackensack River west to Winocksack (Sprout) Brook, bounded north by land of Daniel River and south by lands also purchased by Richard Pope. On October 29, 1695, Albert Sobrisco of Hackensack sold 224 acres on the west side of the Hackensack River to Jacob Vansan of New York. The survey for this tract began at the north corner of the tract of land that David Ackerman purchased from Matheus Corneliuson, fronting the Hackensack River and extended two and a quarter miles northwest to a branch of the Saddle River (now called Sprout Brook), being bounded north by land patented to Gawen Lawrie in right of Peter Sonmans and south by land of David Ackerman. The Council of the East Jersey Proprietors, meeting on November 11, 1695, agreed to the petition of Albert Zobrisco to grant a patent to Jacob Jansen (Van Saun) for 229 acres sold him and for a warrant to lay out 200 acres wanting of his former patent upon the Saddle River. Jacob Vansan of New York City, boatman, received his deed for the same on November 29, 1695. This tract (now in River Edge) extended from Howland Avenue south to Reservoir Avenue; to the west, the original boundary line runs along the south side of Lexington Drive.

On June 1, 1702, Orachanap (alias Metachenak), Coovang and Nomerason, Tappan Indians, conveyed a tract of 1,200 acres on the southeast side of Saddle River, called Weerommensa, to Albert Zaborowsky. This tract began on the northeast bounds of Claess Jansson Romyn's land (now Mill Road) and ran beyond his line to a great rock, from thence it ran in a straight line "up to a certain small run [Musquapsink Brook] which is Easterly just below a certain old Indian field or plantation, known by the name of Weromensa" (located in vicinity of intersection of Wierimus Road and Woodcliff Avenue),"18 to a marked pear tree, from thence in a straight line (along present route of East Allendale Avenue and Woodcliff Lake Road) to certain wild cherry trees or a white oak, marked on three sides, from thence to the Saddle River and down the River to the beginning point, supposedly encompassing 1,200 acres. On March 29, 1708, Albert Zaborowsky of Hackingsack, yeoman, conveyed "the full, true and equal half" of this tract to Thomas Van Buskerk.

As interpreter, Albert Zabriskie negotiated a sale of land on the Passaic River by the native owners to George Ryerson of Pechqueneck, Francis Ryerson of New York City and Jurya Westervelt of Hackensack, by deed dated September 16, 1709. He died September 1, 1711, aged about 73 years, and was buried at Ackinsack, being survived by his wife and five sons: (1) Jacob A., (2) John A., (3) Joost A., (4) Christian A., and (5) Henry. He left no will and his lands were apparently divided among his children the following summer. On June 11, 1712, Jacob Zabriskie of New Barbadoes, yeoman, sold the farm or plantation within New Hackensack, occupied by Albert Zabriskie during his lifetime, to John Zaborowsky (Zabriskie) for £300.20 This tract began northwest on the Hackensack

River and extended southeast to the Overpeck Creek, being bounded southwest by the line of Peter Vanderlinda and northeast by land of Eptkey Banta. Jan or John Zabriskie was born at Hackensack about 1682. He married (1) Elizabeth Claes Romeyn on September 20, 1706. She died in 1712 and he married (2) Margareta Johns Durie. He produced four children by his first wife and another nine children by his second wife, namely: Albert, Matilda, Nicholas, Christina, Elizabeth, John, Jacob, Elizabeth, Peter, Joost, Rachel, Cornelius and Christian. Albert Zaberowski's farm of 183 acres at New Hackensack passed subsequently to Jan's son, Joost, in 1766.

Part Two

Albert Zabriskie's sons, Jacob and Christian, received title to his lands at Old Paramus. Christian A. Zabriskie and his wife, Leah Hopper, had several sons, namely, Albert, Jacob, Andries (Andrew), and Hendrick, who brought the gravelly bottomland of the Saddle River into a high state of cultivation.

Jacob Christian Zabriskie, born December 22, 1724, married Lea Ackerman, daughter of Gerrit Ackerman and Jannetje Albertse Van Voorhees, on August 7, 1747. They had a son Christian, born February 15, 1749, and a daughter Leah, born July 29, 1752. Jacob leased a grist-and-saw mill upon the Saddle River from Abraham Gouverneur about 1766. The 80-acre mill farm included a new, four-room stone house and four-bent barn. With Samuel Demarest as partner, Jacob C. Zabriskie purchased the mill from Willima Bayard on January 26, 1771. Revolutionary maps identify it as "Demarest's and Zabriskie's Mills."

Popularly known as Konig Yawp (King Jacob), he served as a Bergen County Freeholder during the Revolution and was a zealous patriot. According to a story first published in 1858, Jacob and his son-in-law, Isaac Sloat, had to evade Tory scouting parties by spending their nights hidden among the rushes and elder bushes by the mill-pond at (what was later known as) Red Mills. For several weeks, they escaped capture, but were finally taken prisoner by a party of British soldiers, who were returning to New York after having burnt Hoppertown (now Hohokus). They were marched through New Bridge, Old Hackensack and crossed the Hudson River at Bull's Ferry. The two spent eleven months in prison, being confined at Provost Jail, the Sugar House, and lastly, upon the prison ship Jersey. The following anecdote was often told, in later years:

"As the British officer, with his squad of men were marching along one of the streets leading to the Jail whether they were conducting his prisoners, he halted in front of a drinking place, and asked Zabriskie 'if he would not like to have some punch;' Zabriskie said 'that he would.' 'Well,' the officer said, 'if you will drink King George's health, I will give you a glass.' 'Oh! yes, yes, I'll drink George's

health.' So the glass was handed to him, and looking the officer square in the face, he exclaimed, 'Health and success to George Washington!' - and down went the punch."

Jacob C. Zabriskie died April 14, 1804.³

Andries (Andrew) C. Zabriskie, son of Christian A. and Leah Zabriskie, was born December 28, 1728 at Paramus and christened January 15, 1729 at Schraalenburgh. He married Elizabeth Ackerman, another daughter of Gerrit Ackerman and Jannetje Van Voorhees.⁴ Their children were: (1) Christian A., born February 22, 1751; (2) Jannetje, born December 26, 1760. On March 21, 1761, Christian A. Zabriskie of Peremis, yeoman, conveyed "a parcel of meadow at Peremis" to his son Andrew C. Zabriskie of Peremis, for £75.⁵ This tract was bounded by lands of Lucas Bogert, Hendrick C. Zabriskie and Albert C. Zabriskie.

By his last will and testament, probated September 2, 1774, Christian A. Zabriskie, of Paramus, provided his wife Leah (Hopper) with the use of his lands for so long as she remained his widow.⁶ He gave his eldest son, Albert, 14-1/2 acres of meadow, near Lucas Bogert. His sons Jacob C., Andries C. and Hendrick C. Zabriskie each received 14 acres of meadow. He bequeathed to his son Albert "the swamp at the upland, called the Island,⁷ and Saddle River." He devised seats in the Paramus Church to his sons Hendrick, Albert, Jacob, Andries, and to Jacob's eldest son. Hendrick's eldest daughter was to receive a seat if she paid 18 shillings to Albert's eldest daughter. On December 13, 1774, Hendrick C. Zabriskie of Paramus conveyed his "parcel of meadow at Paramus," bounded west by lands of Jacob C. Zabriskie, north by lands of Andries Zabriskie, east by lands of Jacob C. Zabriskie and south by Andries Zabriskie's own land, to (his brother) Andries Zabriskie of Paramus for £105.⁸

In 1882, it was written that: "The homestead of Christian [A. Zabriskie] fell by inheritance to Cornelius [C. Zabriskie], and is now occupied by his daughter, Mrs. C. L. Wessels."⁹ If so, then Andries (that is, Cornelius' father) acquired it from his brother Hendrick on April 1, 1784, when Hendrick Zabriskie of Paramus conveyed two tracts of land to Andries Zabriskie of Paramus for the nominal fee of £12.¹⁰ . The boundary survey of the first lot, containing 140 acres, bounded southwest upon lands of David Terhune and by the Saddle River, northwest and north by lands of Andries Zabriskie, and southeast by the Sprout Brook. The second lot, a parcel of land "by the name of the Island, it being the south end thereof," was bounded south by swamp lands of Andries and Jacob Zabriskie, west by Albert Zabriskie's low ground, and north and east by by Andries Zabriskie's low ground, containing 9 acres. After August 1784, the 170 acres previously shown as the improved acreage of Andries C. Zabriskie is henceforth shown in tax assessments as being divided between his son and him. As indicated by initials and a date

carved in the lintel of a cellar window, Andries C. Zabriskie built a sandstone dwelling house on the east side of Paramus Road, nearly opposite the intersection of Dunkerhook Road, in 1790.

Christian A. Zabriskie, born February 22, 1751, was listed in the New Barbadoes tax assessments as a "Householder" on his father's farm from 1778 until 1784, when he first appears as owner of 70 acres. In 1786, he was listed as a merchant. He served as a Chosen Freeholder from 1790 to 1793. Between 1768 and his death on January 10, 1813, he sired four children and outlived three wives, being survived by his fourth. It is probable that part of the dwelling at 273 Dunkerhook Road, including a small sandstone wing, was partly built for Christian A. Zabriskie, upon his father's farm, shortly after the Revolution - perhaps in 1786 when he first appears as a merchant in the tax assessments. The operation of a store on this lane may have prompted the application to make Dunkerhook Road a public thoroughfare in 1793, in effect opening a route west to Paterson. The stonework of the east wing of 273 Dunkerhook Road suggests a date of construction at about that time. A frame dwelling of side-hall plan - now the oldest portion of 263 Dunkerhook Road - may have been built for Christian's son, Cornelius C. Zabriskie, about the time of his marriage in 1803. Christian A. Zabriskie died in January 1813. When Andrew C. Zabriskie died on January 14, 1819, aged 90 years, his grandson, Cornelius, then occupied his sandstone residence on the east side of Paramus Road. Thereafter, the cottages on the north side of Dunkerhook Road were occupied as tenant houses by Black farmers.

In August-September 1792, Christian A. Zabriskie's new son-in-law, John Anderson, was listed as half owner of a "Vessel" and one slave. He was listed in August 1793 as owner of a vessel and as a householder. On October 4, 1793, the inhabitants of the Island neighborhood petitioned for a public road to be surveyed: "Beginning at the Bridge near the house of John VanDerbeak in the precinct of Saddle River [now Fairlawn] and from thence to Run Easterly nearly as the Road now goes over the lands of Jacob Zabriskie, Andrew Zabriskie & others until it comes to the Post road [now Paramus Road] that leads from Hackensack to Hoppertown near the house of said Andrew Zabriskie." Accordingly, the surveyors of the public highways laid out what is now Dunkerhook Road.

On August 5, 1801, Peter L. Elmendorf and Christian A. Zabriskie, of New Barbadoes Township, brought "their slave named Tom" on "a View and Examination" before two Overseers of the Poor and two Justices of the Peace, who found him to be "sound in Mind and not under any Bodily incapacity of obtaining a support and also...not under the age of 21 years nor above the age of 40 years." Christian A. Zabriskie moved his mercantile operations to a tract of land, situated on the south side of the mouth of the Saddle River and on the east side of the

Passaic River, which he bought of Casparus Van Vorst on September 4, 1801. By his last will and testament, probated January 27, 1813, Christian A. Zabriskie, of Saddle River Township, Merchant, bequeathed \$500, and "also a negro wench named Jude," to his beloved wife, together with sufficient furniture to furnish a room completely, including a bed, bedstead and bedding, and two cows. For as long as she remained his widow, she was to "have the privilege of occupying such room in my present dwelling house for herself and servant as she thinks proper and to choose to have" and to be provided pasturage and provisions by their son, Abraham, at his expense. He left a legacy of \$2,000 to his daughter Catherine Anderson, wife of John Anderson, a Hackensack merchant, to be paid out of his estate by his son Abraham in four equal annual payments. He devised all the rest and residue of his estate to his son Abraham; if Abraham was not of age when he died, then his executors were to sell his estate immediately and provide his son with the proceeds. His real estate included lands on Preakness Mountain, in Saddle River Township, together with the house and two acres of land that he purchased of John S. Terhune.

Cornelius C. Zabriskie, son of Christian A. Zabriskie and Martyntje Bogert, was born March 17, 1784 and christened April 25. He married Maria Hopper, daughter of John A. Hopper and Marytje Cooper, at the Paramus Reformed Church on May 21, 1803. Their children were: (1) Christian Andrew, born February 25, 1804, died August 16, 1805; (2) Mary Martena, born August 21, 1806; (3) Mathilda Bogert, born December 10, 1810; and (4) Catherine Law, born November 22, 1814.

On September 18, 1809, Andrew (Andries) Zabriskie, then 81 years old, conveyed his messuage containing 133 acres, together with the Island Lot, containing a little more than 6 acres, to (his grandson) Cornelius C. Zabriskie for \$5.20 On the same day, Andrew also conveyed three tracts of land to Cornelius' older brother, Andrew C. Zabriskie, of New York City, for \$5.21 : the first tract contained 73 acres and 11 perches; the Island Lot contained 3 acres; and a lot of woodland contained 13 acres and 3 perches, for a total of about 90 acres.

Cornelius C. Zabriskie, of Paramus, served as Captain of the Saddle River Militia during the War of 1812. He died November 20, 1865, aged 82, and was buried in the Vault Lot off Dunkerhook Road. By his last will and testament, he provided that the family vault in the June Orchard, containing two acres of land enclosed by a stone wall, should remain "the joint and common property, saved to his children and their descendants of his family forever, the title to be equally shared by his children and he further forbid that the family vault should ever be sold and if any sale of his lands or homestead farm should ever be made by his heirs, then free ingress and egress to said June Orchard family cemetery should be reserved in any future sale of his homestead farm." He bequeathed to his daughter Matilda Bogert,

wife of Peter Board, the farm that he bought from Cornelius C. Bogert and "now in her possession and occupation," containing 104 acres with improvements. Cornelius C. Zabriskie devised "my homestead farm now in my occupation and possession," containing 139 acres, together with all the buildings and improvements of every kind, to his daughter Catherine Law, wife of Wessel Wessels. Catherine Law Wessels, however, was required to pay a legacy of \$10,000 to her sister, Mary Martena, wife of Isaac Zabriskie, within two months after Cornelius' decease. He also bequeathed a \$1,000 bond against the New York Central Railroad to his daughter Mary Martena. The residue of his personal property was to be equally divided by his daughters or their heirs. He left his two silver hat buckles, one half of his collection of ancient silver coins, and a silver-head walking cane presented to him by his friend Francis Wessels, to his grandson Cornelius Zabriskie. He left the other half of his collection of ancient silver coins, an ancient silver watch that had been in his possession for half a century, a silver-head walking cane made of whale bone and presented to him by Captain Silas Edwards, and his gold sleeve buttons, to grandson Cornelius Z. Board.

Catherine Law Zabriskie, daughter of Cornelius C. Zabriskie, was born November 22, 1814 and christened at the Paramus Reformed Church on March 5, 1815. She married Wessel Wessels at the Paramus Reformed Church on October 8, 1843. Her husband, son of Wessel Wessels and Maria Bogert, was born October 5, 1796 and was christened December 9, 1796 in New York City. They lived on the east side of Paramus Road in the old homestead purportedly built by Andrew C. Zabriskie in 1790. They had one child: Mary B., born 1844. Wessel Wessels died October 22, 1869.

Catherine L. Wessels, residing in the Benedict Building at Broadway and Cortlandt Streets, New York City, died March 15, 1892. Under the provisions of her will, "all of my lands, situated at Paramus, about 140 acres with buildings and improvements thereon and which comprises my family homestead" went to her daughter Mary B. Pell, wife of John H. Pell, during her natural life. After Mary's decease, the homestead farm was go to Catherine's nephew, Cornelius Z. Board, during his natural life. Upon the decease of the survivor of Catherine's daughter Mary or her nephew Cornelius Z. Board, she devised the property to Matilda, the eldest daughter of her nephew Cornelius Z. Board (if living) or to Matilda's sister Laura (if living), then to their brother Frederick Z. Board. She further ordered that "the family vault on the premises be always respected and preserved as and for the purpose of such vaults and that the orchard on which the same is situated be treated and preserved as the curtilage or enclosure for such vault without cutting down any living trees therein and without plowing or other farm cultivation thereof." She further desired that which ever of the children of her nephew, Cornelius Z. Board, or to the one of them who may finally succeed to the premises, that "she or he will

endeavor to make such disposition as will tend to retain the said homestead, premises, or the title thereof, among the descendants of my father as long or during as many generations as may be." Catherine L. Wessels further devised "to Benjamin Bennett and Bartholomew Westerhaven (both of my service)...to each of them to be held and enjoyed by him during his natural life the cottage or dwelling now occupied by him at Paramus on the [Dunkerhook] road leading to Paterson with the single lot or parcel of land on which said cottage stands and which is now fenced or enclosed therewith." On December 12, 1921, Frederick Z. Board and Anna, his wife, conveyed four tracts comprising the old Zabriskie-Board Homestead on Paramus Road to William Ross Proctor of Brookwood Farms, Barryville, Sullivan County, New York. Proctor sold eight tracts in Paramus to George B. Hitchcock, of Teaneck, in October 1925. On November 30, 1925, George and Florence Hitchcock conveyed the same properties to the Paramus Realty Company. George B. Hitchcock and Edwin Hallberg, of the Paramus Realty Company, constructed an eighteen-hole golf course on the Zabriskie farm in 1929. The old stone mansion on Paramus Road was converted to a clubhouse, being outfitted with locker rooms, showers, restaraunt and golf professional's apartments. It burned in 1932. The Dutch barn on the premises, much altered, still survives.