

The Sutphen Family



The First Three Generations in Texas

Dedicated to Margie Sullivan, a Fourth Generation Sutphen

And in memory of all the Sutphens who came before us, especially Mayme Sutphen Vanecek,
who searched for our ancestors for over 20 years.

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The Sutphen Family in America

The Sutphen name is Dutch in origin, originally Van Zutphen, meaning "from Zutphen," a town in Holland. There are several spellings of the name, including Sutphin, Sutfin, and Sutven, but all are likely descended from the same family. Various spellings of the same name are common in historical documents; many people did not know how to write, and words were simply spelled the way they sounded.

The first Sutphen who came to the New World was Dirck Jansen Van Zutphen, who emigrated from Zutphen, Holland in 1650. His wife was Lysbeth Janse Jacobse Van Nuys, daughter of Jan Jacobsen van Rhenen and Geertje Gysberts, and the step-daughter of Auke Janszen Van Nuys. Dirck and Lysbeth are believed to be the progenitors of all the Sutphen families in the United States.

Mr. Louis P. De Boer, who wrote the historical prologue for the 1926 book "The Sutphen Family", written by Abraham Van Doren Honeyman and published by Van Tassel Sutphen, expressed the belief that our Dirck Van Zutphen was the same Dirck Van Zutphen who is known as the "Hero of Breda" for his bravery in the Battle of Breda in 1590. The following information on the battle is from "The Sutphin Family: A Missing Branch" by Gerry Sutphin Harris:

During the period of the religious wars in Holland, while that country was being subjected to the tyrannical reign of the Hapsburg Emperor, Phillip II, the Dutch revolted against the cruel successor of Charles V. The Revolutionaries rallied behind the inspiring guidance of William of Orange, who was the owner of large estates in The Netherlands. His son Maurice pushed forward to the final victory of the Republican cause.

In 1590, the Spanish held the walled city of Breda, which was one of the principal strongholds along the Southern battlefield in Brabant. The house of Nassau had held personal possession of this city since the 13th Century, and Maurice of Orange-Nassau, was determined to recapture the fortress and eject the Spanish garrison.

The Spanish forces in Breda, were regularly supplied with fuel from the outlying countryside by means of small vessels which traveled along the canals, and were admitted to the city through carefully guarded watergates. A plan was devised to smuggle in a small group of Revolutionary soldiers, who would conceal themselves under the loads of firewood and peat. Once within the gates, they would overthrow the guards and open the gates for the main force of the Dutch Army, This was a very dangerous undertaking, and discovery meant certain death. The plan proved to be successful and the Spaniards were driven out of Breda, and withdrew from a large part of Brabant and Zeeland.

Among the 60 volunteers who were selected for this desperate attempt to capture the city, was a soldier named Dirck Van Zutphen, who was then about 28 years of age. Only one of these gallant soldiers fell in the attack, and the remainder were commissioned as officers in the army. Each man received a gold medal and freedom from taxes for life, provided he elected to settle in Breda. The only other Dutch-American family, that of Van Nes, can claim the honor of being ancestrally represented, with the Van Zutphens, in this daring deed of arms, which was one of the most picturesque episodes of the Dutch War of Independence.

Other researchers believe that our Dirck is not the hero of Breda. Susan Amicucci stated in an article in *New Netherland Connections* in 2001 that there is no evidence that Dirck is even related to the "hero of Breda." She goes on to explain that Honeyman misapplied current usage of surnames to the 17th century family, and assumed that the Van Zutphens of Breda must be related to Dirck, when in fact the name "Van Zutphen" simply meant that they came from Zutphen or the surrounding area.

Amicucci has studied baptism records of Dirck Van Zutphen's children, and has theorized that Dirck is the son of Jan Hendricksen Wesseling and Elsje Jans, and that he had two other siblings: Harmentje Jans (wife of Jeuriaens Janszen Van Aurick) and Hendrick. Jan Wesseling, Elsje Jans, and their children, Dirck, Harmentje, and Hendrick, all came to Staten Island from Vorden, located near Zutphen, with Cornelis Melyn's settlers in 1650.

Dirck and his family settled in New Amsterdam, now New York City. They owned 300 acres in Manhattan, which is now bordered near 72nd avenue to 79th avenue, and several streets wide. They also owned 3 slaves valued at 30 guilders each ("Genealogy", New Jersey, Volume 1, published in 1910, New York, Lewis Historical Publishing Company).

In the 1890s, the New York Historical Society began publishing abstracts of wills recorded in the Surrogate's office of the County of New York in its publication "Collections". On page 447 of the edition published in 1892 is the abstract of Dirck Sutphen's will. The original is recorded in Liber F, page 419. The will was written on 4 September 1702 and proved on 29 October 1707.

I, Dirck Van Sutphen, being at the present in good health, I leave to my eldest son Jacob 10 Pounds when of age. I leave to my dear wife Elizabeth all the rest of my estate during her life. But if she marries, then she shall convey all the estate to the guardians of my children. After the death of my wife all the estate is to be divided among my children -- Jacob, Jan, Dirck, Greentie [i.e. Geertie], Abraham, Isaac, Elizabeth, Elsie (wife of Harmon Gerittse) and Hendricke (wife of Peter _____). My will is that my eldest son Jacob shall have the farm on which I now live, he paying to the rest the sum it shall be appraised at. I appoint my friends, Cornelius Van Brunt, Jacques Cortelyou, Joost Van Brunt and Peter Cortelyou, guardians of my children.

Witnesses: Samuel Leveridge, Daniel Latham, John King, Abraham Gouverneur

After Dirck's death, some of his children moved to Monmouth County, New Jersey, which was to be the site of the Battle of Monmouth seventy years later during the American Revolution. The battle was fought in 1778, in part on Sutphen (Sutfin) land.

The following is from an historic marker installed along the Monmouth Battlefield hiking trail in Englishtown, Monmouth County, New Jersey by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection:

As the temperature approached 100 degrees, and gunners collapsed from heat exhaustion, a plucky Irish water carrier stepped forward to help work Captain Francis Proctor's cannon. Memories of her heroism evolved into myth of "Molly Pitcher."

When the British infantry pursued General Scott's Continentals across the Sutfin farm, they were stopped by a barrage of canister and grapeshot. Most of the Continental artillery then switched to other targets, leaving Captain Proctor to bombard the battalion of Royal Highlanders pinned down in Derick Sutfin's cider orchard.

Private Joseph Martin, described watching, as "A woman...attended with her husband at the piece the whole time. While in the act of reaching a cartridge and having one of her feet as far before the other as she could step, a cannon shot from the enemy passed directly between her legs without doing any other damage than carrying away all the lower part of her petticoat. Looking at it with apparent unconcern, she...continued her occupation."

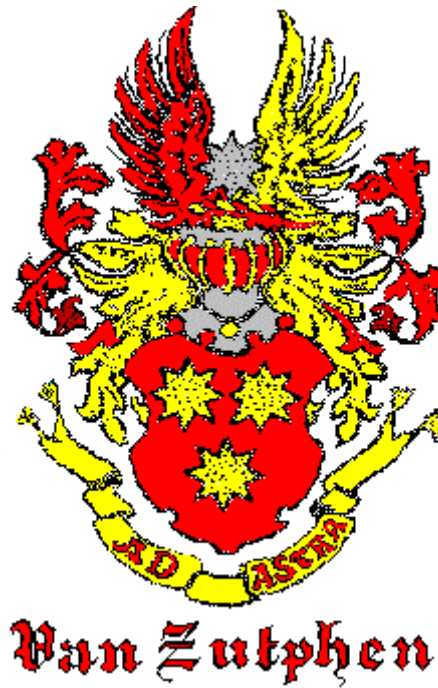
The woman was Mary Hays, wife of William Hays, Gunner, Captain Francis Proctor's company of the Pennsylvania or 4th Continental Artillery Regiment. After the war, the Hayses settled in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where, after outliving two husbands Molly died in 1832.

Coincidentally, the great-great-great-grandfather of Theresa Elizabeth Eager Sutphen, Robert Eager, may have been killed during the very same battle, perhaps on Sutphen land.

There are now several different Sutphen lines, with several different spellings, many of which can trace their lineage back to Dirck.

The Texas Sutphens are currently an unconnected branch. Our common ancestor, John S. Sutphen, brought his family to Texas in November of 1850 from Tennessee. He married Matilda Chrisman in 1833 in Franklin County, Tennessee. No records prior to that date have been found, and no connection to other known Sutphen lines has been discovered.

The Van Zutphen Coat of Arms



The Zutphen Coat of Arms is documented in Reitstap's Armorial General. The shield is described as follows:

"Red; Three gold eight-pointed stars"

Above the shield and helmet is the crest, which is described as:

"A gold eight-pointed star between a pair of wings of red and gold"