

Chapter 3.11

JOHANNES AND ELIZABETH HEYLIGER

1739 - 1820



Cannons in the Oranje Fort, St. Eustatius. Johannes Heyliger succeeded his father as the Constable of the Oranje Fort in 1771 on Abraham Heyliger's appointment as the island's Governor. These cannons were fired on 16th November 1776 to salute the flag being flown by a rebel American warship entering Oranjestad roads. The Governor of the island of St. Kitts, visible in the distance, reported the event to London, with disastrous consequences later for St. Eustatius.

Chapter 3.11. Johannes and Elizabeth Heyliger.

Johannes Heyliger was born on the island of St. Eustatius in the Netherlands Antilles in 1739 the son of Abraham Heyliger and Adriana Lucas Raapzaat (see Chapter 3.10). He married Elizabeth Molineux in 1760 and the family settled, at least in the early days, on the island of Montserrat, the home of the Molineux family since 1678. Their four children are believed to have been born there. According to the account by Michael Calmeyer¹, the marriage did not work out. Although Elizabeth had been born on St. Kitts, the family had returned, soon after she was born, to Montserrat, where she grew up as a child. Her family were in financial difficulties on Montserrat and after her marriage to Johannes (who had independent means, and expectations from his wealthy parents), his money was used to help out the Molineuxs. Just over ten years later, in 1771, he returned alone to St. Eustatius, minus his fortune and in poor health. His father, Abraham Heyliger (1711-85) was “*Constabel*” of the Oranje Fort in the main town of Oranjestad at the time and when he became Governor of St. Eustatius he appointed Johannes as his successor in the position of Constable. In 1772 Johannes was appointed “*Secretaris*” of St. Eustatius², a position he held until 1776 when ill-health forced him to move to the British Virgin Islands to recuperate. He was succeeded in the position of *Secretaris* by his brother-in-law Jacobus Seijs (Ch.3.20), the husband of Johannes’s sister Maria. Johannes died on the island of Tortola on 23rd September 1776 aged 37. The part played by Johannes in the marriage, its effect on his health, his finances and the inheritances of his children is eloquently described in a letter to Elizabeth from their only daughter, Adriana, dated 24th July 1815. While this letter is reproduced in full in Chapter 3.14, the following notes concerning her three brothers give some idea of life in the West Indies in the eighteenth century. By the age of 12, Adriana had lost her father and by the age of thirty she was the only surviving child. This does not appear to have been unusual; Adriana married William Moore in 1779 and they had 13 children of whom at least five died before the age of thirty.

- 1. Abraham Heyliger.** Born probably on Montserrat in 1761, Abraham died on St. Eustatius on 29th June 1792, aged 31. In his will, made in October 1791, after the customary bequest to the poor of the *Gereformeerde Kerk*³, he left P.275 each⁴ to Joe and Betsy, the two children of a mulatto woman called Jane Ann, to whom he also left his house and its contents in Nieuwe Dorp, St. Eustatius. He left P.230 to his mother Elizabeth and of the remainder of his estate he left half to his younger brother John and half to the children of his sister Adriana. According to Dutch law, Elizabeth was entitled to half her son’s estate; her poor treatment by Abraham is possibly further evidence of the sad state of affairs in the family after Johannes returned alone to St. Eustatius in 1771. Between Abraham making his will in October 1791 and his death in June 1792, his younger brother John had died suddenly, leaving Abraham a half share in the residue of John’s estate, so it is not entirely clear what happened to John’s half of the residue of Abraham’s estate. It appears that Abraham invested his legacy from John’s estate in a part-mortgage⁵ on the “*De Goudsteen*” plantation owned by his brother-in-law William Moore; the sum involved was quite large, namely P.6443, 3 reals & 2 stuivers (small coins).

2. **John Laval Heyliger.** Born probably on Montserrat in October 1765, John died on St. Eustatius on 25th February 1792, aged 27. His will is dated 13th February 1792, less than two weeks before he died and, similarly to Abraham, he made the traditional donation to the poor of the *Gereformeerde Kerk*. His mother, now Mrs. Elizabeth Hagart and living on St. Thomas, in the Danish West Indies, received the half share of his estate as prescribed by Dutch law. The residue was shared equally, half to brother Abraham and half to Adriana's children.
3. **William Lucas Heyliger.** Born on Montserrat on 1st March 1769, William was baptized into the Church of England (not the *Gereformeerde Kerk*) in September that year. In 1794 the 25-year old William sailed from St. Thomas where his mother and stepfather were then living, and was never seen again. It is assumed that his boat went down with no survivors. This event appears to have prompted his brother-in-law, William Moore, to apply to the Governor and Council of St. Eustatius on 10th July 1794 to be appointed guardian of the financial affairs of his three late brothers-in-law who had all died within the preceding two and a half years.

In 1779, when her daughter Adriana was 15 years old, Elizabeth identified a suitable husband for her: Charles Hagart of Banteskine, a wealthy, middle-aged merchant from the island of St. Thomas. Adriana refused and fled to St. Eustatius, the home of her father's family, where she married William Moore on 30th September that year. Charles Hagart and the widowed 37-year old Elizabeth were married the following year, returning later to St. Thomas. In 1791 Charles became a partner with his cousin Robert in the firm of Charles and Robert Hagart of St. Thomas. Hagarts can be found in the St. Eustatius population lists in the eighteenth century, indeed Charles Hagart is listed as a *burgher* (householder) of St. Eustatius in the Rodney List of 1781 (see Chapter 3.10). Elizabeth and Charles Hagart had one child named Thomas Campbell Hagart who was born on St. Kitts in 1784. Robert Hagart later married Ann Moore, one of William and Adriana Moore's daughters. The familial relationships must have been rather difficult; Elizabeth and Adriana appear to have been estranged for life over the issue of Adriana's refusal to marry Charles Hagart, while Ann Moore was married to Charles Hagart's cousin Robert Hagart. Adriana, the only surviving child of Elizabeth's first marriage, clearly did not get on with her half-brother Thomas Hagart, the "*selfish and ungenerous*" only child of Elizabeth's second marriage.

Elizabeth and Charles Hagart moved back to Scotland in 1810 and lived on the Hagart family's Banteskine estate, near Falkirk, until Charles died in 1817 – the year Elizabeth drew up her Deed of Settlement (a Scottish Will). The widowed Elizabeth appears to have moved again because the address shown in her will is Molyneux Cottage, Polmont, near Falkirk. Elizabeth died at Molyneux Cottage on 16th October 1820; her testament and inventory deposited at the Stirling Sheriff Office by her son Thomas can now be found in the records of the Scottish Registrar General in Edinburgh under reference SC67/36/5. The inventory of her personal estate drawn up by Thomas valued the estate at a not inconsiderable £2,141 3s. 6d. and lists some of Elizabeth's possessions, including a landaulet. A large proportion of her money was being held at the time by Robert Hagart and there are instructions regarding the interest due on this money and its use for the benefit of Robert, his wife Ann (Moore), and their children Betsy and William.

The beneficiaries of Elizabeth's will were (note that all females are identified by their maiden names) :-

Betsy Hagart (Robert Hagart and Ann Moore's daughter) £600
Elizabeth MacInroy–James MacInroy's (grand?) daughter "*my great grandchild*" £400
(No first name) Moore – "*granddaughter (spouse of Duncan McBean)*" £100
Misses Adrianna and Margaret Moores (sic) "*my grandchildren*" £100 each
Thomas C. Hagart – All moveable property.
Robert Hagart and Ann Moore and any other children they may have in addition to Betsy and William – the residue of the estate, to be divided equally.

All five Moore sisters (daughters of Adriana Heyliger and William Moore and thus Elizabeth's grandchildren, see Chapter 3.12) are accounted for, one way or another, in the will. The inclusion of *great grandchild* Elizabeth MacInroy rather than the grandchild Elizabeth MacInroy is puzzling. However the name missing can thus be identified as that of Jane Moore, i.e. Jane McBean, who later became the godmother of both Eliza and Jane Semple.

Note that while all Elizabeth's granddaughters from her marriage to Johannes Heyliger are remembered in the will, all the grandsons are omitted. While four of her seven Moore grandsons had died by 1820, Peter and Raapzaat Moore were definitely still alive in 1820 and we know that Thomas was still alive in March of that year as he was able to carry a letter across the Atlantic for his sister Adriana Semple. Also while the only child of her second marriage, Thomas Hagart, and his wife and children, are generously provided for, the only surviving child from her first marriage, Adriana, aged 56, and living in St. Eustatius, is apparently disinherited. The estrangement of Adriana from her mother is evident from the letter Adriana wrote to the 73-year old Elizabeth in 1815 (see Chapter 3.14). Having said her last goodbyes to her mother five years before her mother's death, I don't imagine that Adriana expected to be remembered in her mother's will.

Thomas Campbell Hagart, Elizabeth's only child by her second husband Charles Hagart, is listed in the Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain under '*Hagart of Bantaskine*' showing details of his wife and children, it describes him as the "*only son of Charles Hagart, Esq., by Elizabeth Molineux his wife, dau. of Philip⁶ Molineux, Esq., and the widow of John Heyligon (sic), governor⁷ of St. Eustatius, West Indies*".

References

¹ Het geslacht Heyliger: planters, reders en regenten op de Bovenwindische Antillen. M.R.H. Calmeyer 1973. Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, The Hague, Netherlands, JaarDeel 27:97-18

² Een Hooglandse familie met West-Indische connecties. J. N. MacInroy of Lude. Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, The Hague, Netherlands. Jaarboek 1973, p. 73

³ The original Calmeyer document (1) shows "*Holl. Ger. Kerk*" which the translator describes as the Gereformeerde Kerk, a stricter sect than the Dutch Reformed Church. I believe it refers to the regular Dutch Reformed Church of the late 1700s.

⁴ The P symbol refers to the Spanish dollar, also called the peso, at the time the main currency in use in the Americas. The original Calmeyer document (1) uses the term “*P. v. 8*” (pieces of eight), which is the same thing – a silver coin worth eight reals.

⁵ The translation of the Calmeyer document is unclear as to whether this “mortgage” means an asset within John’s estate (a loan to William Moore to help him buy the *De Goudsteen* plantation) or a liability (a loan secured on the plantation). I have assumed the former.

⁶ No reference to a Philip Molineux has been found in *Caribbeana* 1914 Edition, (see references in Chapter 3.09). There is ample evidence that her father’s first name was Laval.

⁷ This is an error (probably deliberate). Johannes Heyliger was *Secretaris* of St. Eustatius and died during the governorship of his father Abraham.