

presentation pieces. *Antiques Magazine* praised the work as "the most up-to-date research on the large silver trade in New York City. It presents a wealth of new information about the craftsmen whose work is represented the collection of the Museum of the City of New York." Call 1-800-421-1561 to order.

Also just published by the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland is *Memoirs of Isaac Dumont de Bostaquet, 1632-1709: A Gentleman of Normandy*, translated, introduced, and edited by Dianne W. Ressler. Available in French for 150 years, this is the first time the *Memoirs* have appeared in English. Written in exile after the dragonnade was let loose on the Huguenots of Normandy, the memoir gives graphic accounts of the author's life in France, prior to the revocation, his three happy marriages, his nineteen children, the disasters that befell him over many years, and his participation in the Battle of the Boyne and the Siege of Limerick. His is a full account of the life of a Huguenot who at last found happiness in "serving God in complete freedom." The book can be ordered from the Society c/o the Huguenot Library, University College, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.

#### **Artisan Dynasties: Huguenot Silversmiths in Colonial New York**

*At the Annual Luncheon at the Union Club on December 3, our speaker was Maria A. Dering, a Manhattan-based writer and editor. Following is a condensed version of her lively talk.*

Item 334 of the Common Council Minutes of New York for the year 1723 states: "Warrant Issued: Order'd the Mayor Issue his Warrant to the Treasurer to pay unto Mr. Charles Le Roux Goldsmith . . . the sum of twenty three pounds Nineteen Shillings Current Money of New York for A Gold Box and engraving the same (by this Corporation presented unto Capt. Peter Solgard Commander of his Majesties Ship Greyhound for his Signal service in taking Pyrates upon the Coast &c:) as Appears by his Acct. which is Audited and allowed."

Who was Charles Le Roux? What influence did he have on his and future generations of craftsmen? Who were his Huguenot forefathers? Apprentices?

The father of Charles, Bartholomew Le Roux I (1663-1713), was the first non-Dutch silversmith in New York. He was born in London, to a Huguenot family, and declared a Freeman of New York on 6 June 1687. He was married in the Dutch Church in Lower Manhattan on 16 November 1688 to Geertruyd Van Rollegom.

Charles was most likely born in Flatbush (now part of Brooklyn), baptized there on 22 December 1689, and declared a freeman of New York on 16 February 1724/25. He worked in Manhattan but died in Brooklyn in 1745 after an illustrious career as a silversmith. Charles Le Roux married Catherine Beekman about 1710 in Flatbush.

Bartholomew I had another son who was also a silversmith. John was baptized 14 April 1695, married 18/19 June 1714 to Margrit Britel, and was declared a Freeman of New York on 8 January 1722/23. John

sometimes worked in distant Albany, which, perhaps, is why we don't know much about him.

Bartholomew I also had a daughter, Rachel, who married into the family business when she wed Peter Van Dyck (1684-1751; baptized 17 August 1684), who just happened to be her father's apprentice. In 1748, Rachel and Peter Van Dyck lived in Hanover Square, an area populated by silversmiths, other craftsmen, and dry goods merchants.

In the next generation, Charles had a son, Bartholomew Le Roux II, who was baptized 30 October 1717. Like his father and grandfather before him, Bartholomew II was a silversmith. Charles trained his son, as well as Jacob Ten Eyck (the son of an Albany silversmith, Koenraet Ten Eyck), and possibly two Ten Eyck cousins, Tobias and Lucas Stoutenburgh.

Prior to 1750, there were a total of 60 silversmiths in New York: 32 were of Dutch heritage, 10 were Huguenots, and 7 were English. Between 1750 and the Revolution, the craft of silversmithing reached artistic and commercial heights. You'll see the quality of this craft, and can observe similarities among certain silversmiths, if you walk through the fourth floor Henry Luce III Center at the New-York Historical Society.

Besides the objects at the N-YHS and also at the Museum of the City of New York and the Metropolitan Museum of Art—all of these protected by Plexiglas—you can view Huguenot influence everyday here in Manhattan, right out in the open. You'll see it in the seal of the City of New York. Look up at the giant seal on the façade of 1 Centre Street—the Municipal Building—the next time you're in Lower Manhattan. The seal is based on engravings made by Charles Le Roux for the November 15, 1734, issue of English paper Bills of Credit.

Thanks to early newspapers with their detailed advertisements, we know that many silversmiths lived in Manhattan, although Charles Le Roux and his family lived in the wilds of Flatbush, Brooklyn. Regardless of their domiciles, the smiths knew the importance of having their workrooms right here in Manhattan.

As I close this article, I'd like to turn to the fate of the independent silversmiths who stayed in New York and plied their trade along Maiden Lane, Queen Street (now Pearl Street), and in Hanover Square. Some worked successfully for many generations. Others found the need to change careers. But in 1838, something monumental happened, and it revolved around the trademark Tiffany blue box and a man named William Gale. But that's another story for another time.

#### **References:**

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