OLD DUTCH FAMILIES

By Richard Schermerhorn, Jr.

Fondas were important in up-state New during the Colonial period and in the early ment of the State. Presumably the family nsian origin and one genealogist has out- European background for the Fondas giv- them a really illustrious descent. However, stories apparently come from tradition rather and substance.

emigrant ancestor of this family was Jillis Gillis) Douwese Fonda whose name first ars in Albany records in 1651 and last in 1654. ely son, Douw Jellise, became the ancestor Fondas in this country.

ouw Jillesz Fonda was born about 1643 and d 1700. His father apparently died when was a boy and a record shows that Douw dwelling with Jan Tyse (Jan Tyse Goes of ethook) in the Colony of Rensselaerwyck in and that his step-father, Barent Gerritse, owed 83 beavers. Barent Gerritse married Hester widow of Jillis, sometime between 1656 and and was killed in the second Esopus War in and Hester Fonda, his wife, was taken pris- by the Indians. The widow eventually re- ed to Albany, her name appearing in occa- Albany records, as late as 1681. She had arently made a third marriage to Theunis ckez Van Vechten, sometime before 1672. There new records to illustrate the activities of Douw dow but in 1676 his land at "Lubberden Landt" the area of the present city of Troy) is men- ned and in 1684 he was nominated for magis- te at Albany.

The Fonda family was one of decided influence the upper Hudson River districts and the Mo- Valley. Fondas occupied important posi- in the governmental affairs of the up-State ements in Albany, Schenectady, and the Mo- Valley. They were early settlers in what is the Troy district, as well as Hoosic, Albany d Schenectady. One branch of the family main- ned a substantial shipping business between mbia County and New York. In Dutchess nty there were persons of importance from this nch of the family.

Douw Fonda (1643) had four sons leaving male eny, Jan, Jillis, Isaac and Nicholas, but the line in Nicholas' family died out early so the endants of Jan, Jillis and Isaac are those who ed the name down to late generations.

ajor Jellis Fonda (1727-91) was the most prom- of the early Fondas. He was the first Mo- Valley merchant west of Schenectady and e period immediately previous to the Revolu- was one of the outstanding figures in that sec- He was a close friend and associate of Sir m Johnson and accompanied him on his mil- expeditions as commissary. He served in the ch and Indian War under Sir William Johnson mmand of Scouts (lieutenant in 1755 and cap- in 1756) and was commissioned Major in spending much of his time during this period Indian country.

The Van Hornes inherited a substantial amount of his estate (a granddaughter of Jellis married Abraham Van Horne). Jellis was one of the four assistant judges of Tryon Court, elected 1773; State Senator, Western District, 1777-81 and 1788-91; County Judge 1784 and Commissioner of Indian Affairs. He was one of the executors of the will of Sir William Johnson and designated as guardian of the latter's children. Jellis Fonda is frequently referred to in the well known novel "In the Valley" by Harold Frederic and also in the novels by Robert W. Chambers dealing with Mohawk Valley and Tryon County history.

Descendants of Jellis Fonda (c 1670) and Rachel Winne settled in Schenectady and Caughnawaga (now Town of Fonda). Jellis had three sons leaving male issue: Douw (1701) Abraham (1715) and Jacob (1722). Douw settled in Caughnawaga in 1751 and was a close friend of Sir William Johnson (see account of his son Major Jellis). He was killed by the Indians in 1780. Abraham and Jacob settled in Schenectady.

Following are the prominent members of this branch.

Major Jellis Fonda (1727)—(See foregoing account.)

Adam Fonda (1736)—Officer in Tryon County Militia, served under General Herkimer in Battle of Oriskany; he and his brother John were taken prisoners by the Indians in 1780, taken to Canada and held there two years.

Henry A. Fonda (1766)—Captain in the War of 1812, later Brigadier General; Assemblyman, Montgomery Co.

Douw A. Fonda (1774)—Assemblyman, Montgomery Co.

Peter H. Fonda (1802)—Assemblyman, Montgomery Co.

John Giles Fonda (1822)—Colonel in Civil War, Brevet Major General.

Henry A. Fonda (c. 1825)—Bank President, Pennsylvania, Colonel on Governor's Staff.

Douw A. Fonda (1824)—Montgomery County Treasurer, Supervisor Village of Fonda.

Garret T. B. Fonda (1808)—Passenger Agent, Schenectady and Utica R.R. (N. Y. Central) for many years.

Jellis A. Fonda (1759)—Captain in Revolution; Assemblyman, Schenectady Co.; Canal Commissioner; Supervisor Schenectady: County Clerk.

Alexander G. Fonda (1785)—Union College, 1803; Schenectady physician.

Jellis J. Fonda (1751)—Captain in Revolution: "served with particular distinction in campaign against Burgoyne" and "highly distinguished himself in battle of Johnstown (1781)"; a noted officer of the Revolution. Res. Schenectady.

Henry V. Fonda (1788)—Schenectady lawyer.
Christopher Fonda (1795)—Schenectady lawyer.