

RICHARD STOUT
And
PENELOPE VAN PRINCESS

RICHARD STOUT, born 1615 in Burton Joyce, Nottinghamshire, England; died 23 October 1705 in Middletown, New Jersey, he was the son of John Stout and Elizabeth Bee. He married 1921, Penelope van Princess 1644 in Gravesend, Long Island, New York.

PENELOPE VAN PRINCESS, born 1622 in Amsterdam Noord, Holland; died 1732 in Middletown, New Jersey.

In 1600 in Nottinghamshire, England, an entry was made in the Burton Joyce Parish record book telling of the marriage of one John Stout, of good family, to Elizabeth Bee. To this union was born Richard Stout in 1602 or 1604. When Richard grew up he quarreled with his father over a girl friend, whom the father considered beneath him in social standing. Consequently, Richard ran away from home and joined the English navy. After seven years, when his time was out, Richard got a discharge from the Navy, and left his ship at New Amsterdam about 1640. He took up arms for the Dutch, and so was unharmed by the English when they took over New Amsterdam in 1664.

Richard found friends among some English settlers who, because of their religion, had fled to New Amsterdam from neighboring colonies. Among them were Lady Deborah Moody, her son, Sir Henry Moody, Richard Salter, William Browne, and Thomas Applegate. Together they obtained a charter from the Dutch governor to found the first English settlement on Long Island at Graves End. Thirty-eight others joined Richard where he settled in 1644 on Plantation No 18, which he had purchased five years earlier. Richard became the largest landowner of the group. He may have married when he settled there, if so his first wife was dead when Penelope Prince a widow, appeared on the scene.

When religious persecution made life intolerable for dissenters in England at this period, they fled to Holland and later to America. It seems likely a Baptist Preacher, Rev. Prince, was driven out of Sheffield and lived for a time in Amsterdam, Holland, when Penelope was born. Years later Penelope married a boy from Amsterdam, and together they took a ship for America. This ship was wrecked in 1640 at the northeast corner of New Jersey, on a point called Sandy Hook. The passengers that could, fled overland to the settlement later called New Amsterdam, but Penelope's husband, ill of a fever, was not able to go. Penelope busied herself making him comfortable on the shore when they were attacked by Indians who killed her husband and left Penelope seriously wounded in fact the Indians thought her dead.

But Penelope did not die. Gradual she awoke from her swoon. Suffering from a fractured skull, a hacked shoulder, and a gash on her body which allowed her intestines to protrude, she crept to shelter in a hollow log or tree near by, no doubt she found water from a spring,

and food from the bushes, for she suffered alone there for several days until two Indians came by on a hunt. When they saw her they seemed to argue over what to do with her. The younger wanted to kill Penelope, but the older objected, and finally won the argument, for he came, put her across his shoulder and carried her away to the Indian village. He sewed her wounds with a fishbone needle and thread of vegetable fiber. He treated her kindly and she recovered. She helped the squaws with their work and otherwise adapted herself to Indian life for perhaps a year.

Gradually the rumor reached New Amsterdam that a white woman had been seen in the Indian village. When some of the white men came and offered to buy her, the old Indian called to Penelope and made their desire known, then, asked what she wished to do. When she replied that she wished to go with the men, her captor agreed but accepted the pay they offered for her. Penelope lived in New Amsterdam among some of the English families until Richard Stout chose her for his wife in 1644. A historian of the period says that then they settled at Graves End on Long Island. Richard was forty years of age, and Penelope as in her twenty-second year.

About the time the English took over the rule of the town, perhaps to escape the English. Perhaps seeking more land, Richard and a few other men began exploring the main land of the New Jersey coast, near the place where the Indian had saved Penelope's life. About 1648, Richard, with eleven others purchased a large section of East New Jersey, called Monmouth, from Governor Nichols. Richard bought lot number six and some upland country, in all 745 acres. Thirty years later he had accumulated so much land that he was able to deed eighteen hundred acres to his heirs. Considered the largest landed proprietor, Richard served as overseer of the district of Middletown.

One day, not long after they founded Middletown, the old Indian who had saved Penelope appeared at their home. When he refused to eat with the family Penelope followed him out of the house to learn what was wrong. He had come to warn her that the tribes were coming to attack the settlement. He urged her to take her family and flee to safety in his canoe. When she told Richard the news he refused to believe it. Penelope then gathered the children to the boat and paddled away as best she could to seek aid at New Amsterdam. After Penelope left, Richard reconsidered and gathered the men of the settlement together to make plans. They armed themselves, sent the women and children in canoes to wait off shore while they prepared to watch all night. At midnight the Indians came. When the whites, from a point of vantage attacked, the Indians, armed with only bows and arrows, were soon on the run. Then Richard Stout walked into the open and demanded a parley. After a conference, the whites and Indians held a two-day ceremonial to celebrate a treaty of peace. When the whites greed to buy the lands on which- they had built their town, and alliance for mutual assistance was formed. This treaty was faithfully kept. Though other settlements had war, this one was able to avoid it. The date of the purchase of the land from the Indians was 25 January 1664. Governor Nichols gave the settlers a statement called the Monmouth Patent, which guaranteed them religious and political freedom. There were supposed to be fifty families of whites and 500 Indians inhabiting the area at this time.

As the settlement in New Jersey grew into the town of Middletown, Richard Stout was

appointed to assist in laying out the lots. In 1668, Richard, Penelope, and their family met with others in the kitchen of the Stout home to organize the first Baptist Church of New Jersey. Richard and John, his oldest son, were among the eighteen male charter members. Every Sunday the group met at the homes of its members to sing hymns. Twenty years later a log church was built. Today, a new church stands on the spot, but some of the materials of the old log church are carefully preserved after two hundred years, in this modern building.

Richard's will, approved October 1705, is on file in the Office of the Secretary of State of Trenton. In it he gave his home farm to his youngest son, Benjamin. Though Richard formerly was required to report to the agents of the proprietors in writing, he signed his will with an X, doubtless due to his age, or the state of his health.

Penelope outlived Richard by twenty-seven years, dying in 1732, at the age of 90 or 110, she had been the mother of ten children; seven sons and three daughters. By the time of her death, she had welcomed some, five hundred, and two descendants into the world. It was told of her that she had always to wear a cap because of her scalp scar, and that she had no use of her left arm. Her knowledge of the Indian language, and the fact that she was a friend of the Indian who mended her wounds, no doubt were a great help to the little New Jersey settlement.

The Stout family, which descended from Richard, first in America, and his wife, Penelope, had been living in the northern part of New Jersey for more than a hundred years before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. Only explorers or hunters and traders had yet entered the dense forest of Western Virginia