

The Westervelt Kettle

Riverside By Tom Riley

The Westervelt Kettle is a ca. 17th century iron kettle that was brought from the Netherlands by Lubbert and William Westervelt in 1662. It was passed down through the family for over three hundred years until it was loaned to the Morris County Historical Society in 1964. It was used at the Westervelt Homestead (Butler's oldest home, built in 1704) until 1876, when the farm was sold and broken up at the death of Silas Westervelt.

The Westervelt brothers, Lubbert, his wife Geesje and their four children, and William, his wife Dirkje with their six children sailed out of the port of Amsterdam on May 8, 1662. Geesje and Dirkje Van Houten were sisters. They were listed as "agriculturalists and cattle raisers" in the ship's manifest. The voyage to New Amsterdam (NYC after 1664) in the Dutch Colony of New Netherlands took about four weeks.

The Westervelt name derives from the manorial property called Westerveld near the Zuider Zee in the province of Overijssel, Holland.



The kettle moved to Long Island with Lubbert's family and again in 1664 when they moved to a small settlement west of the North (Hudson) River that served as a trading post with the Hackensack Indians.

Lubbert's son Roelof and a group of other Hollanders purchased a large tract of land in 1695 from the Lord Proprietors of New Jersey. Soon after, Roelof inherited the kettle with the passing of his father.

One of Roelof's sons, Casparus, (born 1694) probably took the kettle when he moved from Bergen County, New Jersey to Poughkeepsie, New York in 1744. It then went to Casparus's son Benjamin and then to his son, Casparus.

Casparus Westervelt (1751-1836) was a Revolutionary War veteran who served with the Dutchess County and Orange County Militias. In 1790 he moved to New York City, remaining there until 1794, when "he went upon a farm in Franklin, NJ." Casparus returned to NYC in 1800, where he owned considerable property. After a stay of twelve years, he became a resident of NJ again, living on a farm in West Bloomingdale (Butler). He died at the Westervelt Homestead in 1836 and is buried in the Historic Manning Avenue Cemetery.



The kettle went to Casparus's son Silas. According to family tradition it was in constant use until 1876. Silas Westervelt and Harriet Kimble had 19 children. A daughter, Susan, purchased the kettle and other family items from her father's estate when he passed and the farm was sold. The old farmhouse still stands at the corner of Valley Road and Grace Valley Road.

Susan Westervelt and her husband Isaiah Riley occasionally used the kettle at their home on Lower Arch Street and their son, George, inherited it with the passing of his mother in 1940. George Riley "loaned" the kettle and other items from the Butler Homestead to the Morris County Historical Society in 1964. If he didn't ask for their return during his lifetime they could be kept by the society.

The kettle was used in a film shown for many years at the welcoming center of the Morristown Historical Park.

The information about the Dutch Westervelts was taken by George Riley from a family history written by Walter Tallman Westervelt in 1904. The rest of the information comes from notes handed down to George's son, Roger Riley, who passed them along to me.

