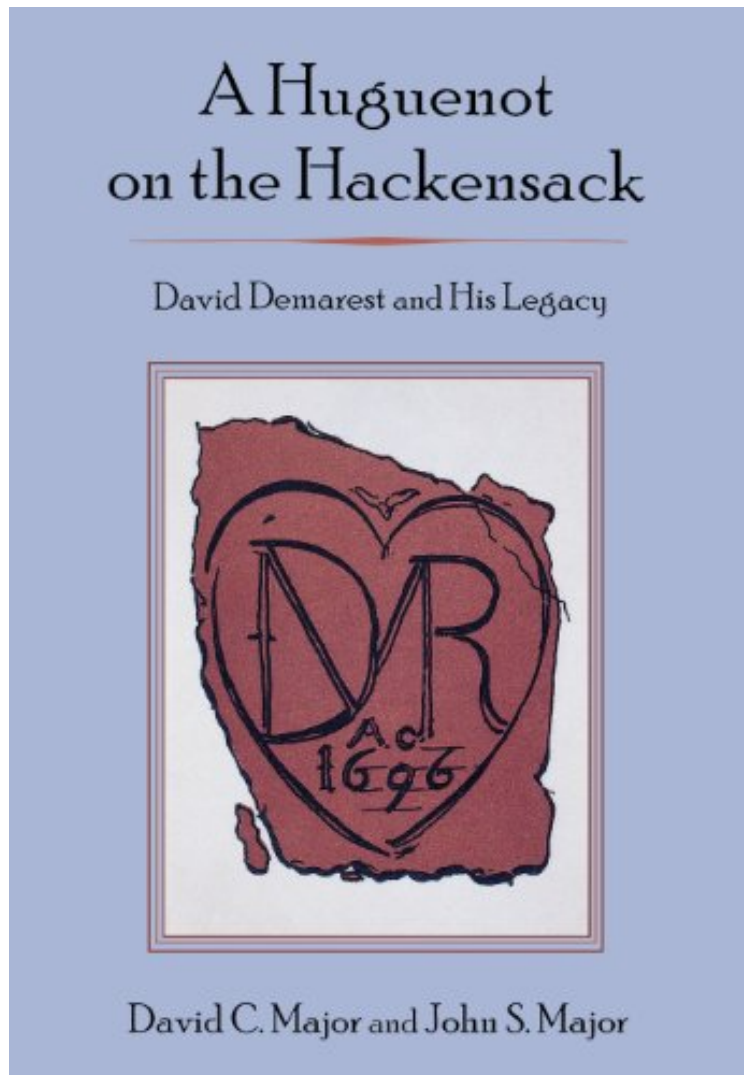


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## A Huguenot on the Hackensack: David Demarest and His Legacy

DAVID C. MAJOR, JOHN S. MAJOR

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**DAVID C. MAJOR, JOHN S. MAJOR : A Huguenot on the Hackensack: David Demarest and His Legacy** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Huguenot on the Hackensack: David Demarest and His Legacy:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Biography of David Demarest (1620-1695) By William LaBach This book is an excellent scholarly study of the life and legacy of David Demarest (1620-1695) and his wife, Marie Sohier, who emigrated from Mannheim, Germany to New Amsterdam (now New York City) in 1663. He was a native of the Picardy region of France and a Huguenot (French Protestant). He first moved to Middleburg in the Netherlands by 1643 where he married and then to Mannheim. Upon arriving in the New World he settled first on Staten Island and

then moved to New Harlem. His final move was to Bergen County, New Jersey where he bought land from the Indians and accumulated about 5,000 acres. The authors explain the Dutch culture in New York and New Jersey and how the Demarest family became a part of it although French. This book should be of great interest to the many thousands of Demarest descendants across the United States and to those interested in the history of New Harlem and northern New Jersey. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Useful for U.S. Colonial history and Demarest family researchers. By Judy Ann Turner Well-researched, well-written, this book did not disappoint in its investigation of David Des Maretz, the Huguenot founder of the Demarest family in America. Illustrations were very useful. My only criticisms concern the sections on David Des Maretz' extraordinary qualities and the sections on Demarest descendants. The authors appear too eager in downplaying Des Maretz' exceptional, bold, visionary character and actions as a pioneer and religious emigrant. More explanation of the historical context of Des Maretz' era would clarify issues such as his decision to emigrate to New Amsterdam, and perhaps illuminate other issues as well, such as his being a possible slave-holder. The sections on Des Maretz' descendants seems abbreviated in explanations about their leaving the Hackensack and difficulties they encountered and largely overcame. Overall, however, this is a successful, useful, highly readable book which I encourage all of Des Maretz' descendants (I am one) to purchase and read. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good history and good genealogy. By Larry Seits If you are a descendant of David Demarest (1620-1693) in its variant spellings (Demaree, De Marets, etc.), and you are legion, I highly recommend this well-written book. If you descend from early Huguenots in New Netherland or New Jersey, I recommend this book as an excellent source of background knowledge of that time and place. Among the book's more useful features are its numerous maps and illustrations. In its glossary, I learned that the Dutch records' "schout" meant sheriff or public prosecutor. The Dutch records' "Schepen" meant a magistrate. And that a "voorleser" was Dutch for a literate man who could read the lessons in church services. I suspect this man read only the Old Testament texts at the sanctuary's lectern. Major and Major have given us good history and good genealogy. Also I have found these three sources useful in genealogy research of Huguenots in this time and place: 1) "The Register of New Netherland 1626-1674" by E. B. O'Callaghan [Baltimore, MD: Clearfield, 2002], reprint of 1865 original. 2) Family Tree Maker's CD #11 "New Netherland Vital Records, 1600s" [Requires a computer and the Family Archive Viewer, a free internet download]. 3) Family Tree Maker's CD 182 "Family History: New Jersey Genealogies #1, 1600s-1800s" [Requires a computer and the Family Archive Viewer].

A Huguenot on the Hackensack is the first full-length study of David Demarest, an early European settler of northeastern New Jersey and progenitor of a large and locally influential family. The book examines Demarest's life, the legacy of his family, and the wider "Jersey Dutch" community in which the family played a prominent part. The book looks beneath accumulated layers of legend and older historical interpretations to formulate a new and more realistic (and more interesting) account of Demarest's life and legacy. Demarest, a Huguenot (French Protestant), was born about 1620 in the French province of Picardy. He first appears in history with the record of his marriage to Marie Sohier in Middleburg, the Netherlands, in 1643. After marriage and the start of a family, his life unfolded in four sojourns of about a decade or a bit more: Middleburg, 1643 to about 1651; Mannheim, Germany, from about 1651 to 1663; Staten Island and New Harlem, 1663-78, and finally the French Patent along the Hackensack River in New Jersey, 1678 to his death in 1693. New evidence and new interpretations provide a picture of Demarest as an ambitious and upwardly mobile entrepreneur with an unusual talent for balancing risk and opportunity, and a dedicated churchman and community leader under both Dutch and English rule. The book next considers the Demarests in the eighteenth century, when the family rose to prominence in Bergen County, played important roles in the Reformed Church in Hackensack and Schraalenburgh, and began to spread out to other parts of the country. Recapitulating Demarest's own career as an entrepreneur and land developer, some of his descendants settled parts of central Pennsylvania, upstate New York, and Kentucky. Many of those who remained in New Jersey were active in public affairs and the Revolutionary War. By the end of the nineteenth century, enormous changes in Bergen County, including the spread of railroads and the transition from a farming economy to a suburban one, spelled the beginning of the end for the cohesiveness and influence of old, locally prominent Jersey Dutch families such as the Demarests. With further economic and demographic changes following World War II, such families were subsumed into the general population. The book concludes with an assessment of the Demarest family's American experience, looks at how pioneer students of Demarest family history shaped and interpreted his life and legacy against the background of changes in American society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and suggests what might yet be learned about Demarest through genetic evidence and the increasing availability of digitized records. Demarest's life and legacy are of interest not just to the large number of his descendants and the numerous descendants of other Jersey Dutch families, but more broadly to those interested in regional history, New Netherland, and American social history.

About the Author David C. Major, PhD, and John S. Major, PhD, are brothers. They are descended from David Demarest, the early French Huguenot settler in the middle Hackensack Valley who is the subject of this book. The Majors are authors and editors of many books in their professional fields: natural resources and the environment for

David, and East Asian history for John.