

## The Labuschagne Commemorative Volume

### The French Ancestors of the Labuschagne Family



The present volume was written in connection with the jubilee in Paarl (in May 2011) celebrating the arrival of Pierre Labuschaigne, the forefather of all the Labuschagnes, on 14th May 1711, at the Cape of Good Hope. It deals with the prehistory of the family but is in fact a case study of the tragic destinies of Huguenot families. The author, prof Casper Labuschagne, offers a penetrating historical review of the violent suppression of dissidents by the Roman Catholic Church in close collaboration with the French State, culminating in the suppression of the Huguenots. The review also focusses on the atrocious methods they employed to force the

dissidents to renounce their faith, or to die as martyrs, or flee their country.

Moreover, the author relates the exciting story of his intensive search over many years to discover the historical places where his forefathers dwelled and the amazing discovery of archival documents in France, Germany and the Netherlands. This enabled him to give a detailed account of the history of his forefathers from the beginning of the 17th up to the start of the 18th century.

The English language version is only available in **e-book format on CD**. It can be ordered at **R90** (plus R20 for postage and packing within SA, and R30 for postage and packing overseas). Orders can be placed at the [Huguenot Society of SA](#) where details about paying via bank transfer are available.

The Afrikaans language version of the book is available in hard copy book format, details of which can be seen by [clicking here](#).

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## **Preface by the Chairman of the Huguenot Society of South Africa**

The motto of the Huguenot Society of South Africa is to preserve and promote our Huguenot history and heritage. This publication is number 3 in the Huguenot Genealogical Series, which forms part of the initiatives for the practical achievement of this goal. It differs from the usual genealogical publication by not focusing on the genealogy of Huguenots who settled at the Cape of Good Hope, but on the prior ancestral history and origin of the progenitor *Pierre Labuscagne*, and the circumstances and conditions in Europe which resulted in his flight from France in 1696 to the Netherlands, and subsequent settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in 1711, where his wife Maria Anna Bacot and their three children joined him in 1717.

The book gives evidence of thorough research – over a period of two decades – by prof Casper Labuschagne, who is resident in the Netherlands, not only by consulting archival sources (proof of which is the extensive list of consulted literature and documents), but also of *in situ* research at relevant places of interest, and extensive travels, which gave new insights and revealed new information. The book sheds light on the pronunciation and spelling of the surname Labuschagne, the meaning and origin thereof, and on the birthplace and region where the progenitor grew up. The description of the circumstances which gave rise to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and the living conditions for Huguenots in France after this event, is of interest not only for Labuschagne descendants, but for every one interested in the history of the Huguenots.

The Huguenot Society of South Africa congratulates the Labuschagne Family Union for its initiatives and the manner in which they promote the history of this Huguenot family. We trust that the descendants of the founding parents, Pierre Labuscagne and Maria Anna Bacot, will be made available in a follow-up genealogical publication to represent the complete history of the family in South Africa.

Prof H Christo Viljoen  
Chairperson: Huguenot Society of South Africa  
October 2011.

## **Preface by the Chairman of the Labuschagne Family Union**

It is my privilege to introduce this E-book to the reading public, three decades after the first publication of this genre by the late Prof. Frans Labuschagne in 1981. The present volume satisfies in many respects a long felt need for a narration of the history of our ancestors in Europa.

The reader is welcomed right away with an exceptional piece of work which echoes the author's power of observation, his sterling research and his thorough knowledge of the history of France covering a period of more than 300 years. The author is an internationally known theologian with a long history of publications and a discerning interest in genealogy and notably in the history of the Huguenots with the emphasis on the fortunes of our ancestors in France and the Netherlands.

Prof. Casper, as he is known to the Family Union, spent many years to gather the relevant information and to present it in such a way that one is easily engulfed by the excruciating actuality of the historical analysis. The structure of the richly illustrated book is concise and the contents easily comprehensible because of the author's lucid style of writing. Additionally, his profound knowledge of several European languages enabled him to correctly interpret archival materials and to illuminate the facts.

One of the highlights in the narration is the discovery of the places in France where our progenitor and his ancestors derived from. Some locations were discovered a short time ago, in 2010, just in time for the Memorial publication marking the 300 year commemoration on 14 May 2011 of the establishment of our family in South Africa. We owe him gratitude for his perseverance and dedication to the self-imposed task which he implemented with distinction.

Additionally, we wish to extend our gratitude to professor Christo Viljoen and the Huguenot Society of South Africa for their willingness to publish the Afrikaans version as part of the Genealogy Series. We hope that a follow-up volume, to be written by Herman Labuschagne, will be published in due course. He will narrate the destiny of the family during the hundred years since the settlement of the Labuscaigne family on Pontac in Paarl in 1723 up to the early years of the 19th century. Herman is also involved in the compilation of our genealogical register which he will publish soon in a revised, extended version on the internet, and hopefully also in print.

Finally I wish to thank the members of the committee, who with untiring dedication and no remuneration cooperated for years to make the Family Union the success that it now is and who, in addition, made the arrangements for the festive celebration in Paarl of our 300 year lineage. We reflect their names with gratitude: Les Labuschagne (Vice-Chairman), Theo van Zijl (Secretary), Hennie Labuschagne, Kroonstad (Treasurer), Herman Labuschagne, Willie Labuschagne, André Labuschagne, Kenneth Labuschagne (Web Master), Ansie Watschön, Phillip Labuschagne, Johan Labuschagne, and Cilna van Wijk (Honorary Patroness).

We dedicate our greatest gratitude to our Heavenly Father for the fact that we as descendants of our Huguenot ancestors can recognize how He determined the destiny of our forefathers and that we can thus be proud of our legacy. May this inheritance likewise be a source of pride and inspiration for our children.

Together with the Psalmist we may rejoice (Ps 16:6, ESV):

*The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.*

Hennie Labuschagne

Chairman of the Labuschagne Family Union

October 2011

## **Introduction and Review of the Contents**

Until recently we knew very little about the history of our French ancestor Pierre Labuscaigne. We only knew that he was of French Huguenot descent and that he escaped to the Netherlands. He stayed for a while in Enkhuizen and was married to a woman from Leeuwarden and had three children. Recent research in the archives in France and the Netherlands produced a treasure house of information about his family in France as well as his stay in the Netherlands.

There are probably few South African Huguenot families in possession of so much information about their French ancestors as we the Pierre Labuscaigne's descendants have, taking in account the dreadful experience of the French Huguenots during the religious wars in France. They were ferociously persecuted and brutally murdered. It is a miracle that so much archive material about our ancestors survived. These records enable us to reveal the roots of our family history and help us to form a reasonable image of the pitiful circumstances under which Pierre was forced to flee his country.

In the light of the above I review in the first chapter the history of the brutal suppression and persecution over centuries by the Roman Catholic Church in France of people with alternative thinking or different religious convictions. These actions happened in close collaboration with the French rulers since the Middle Ages, the absolute nadir being the persecution of the Huguenots. Only by being aware of these circumstances it becomes clear why Pierre had no alternative but to flee his country – like hundred thousands of other Protestants.

In the second chapter we shall consider the spelling, pronunciation and meaning of our ancestral name. Chapter 3 will contain my long protracted search for Pierre's place of origin in France and how I eventually discovered his birthplace and why he gave his little farm in Paarl the name 'Pontac'. In chapter 4 I shall discuss my arduous search for information in the

archives of France and the Netherlands, which culminated in the surprising discovery in 2004 of archive records of the Labuscagne family in Bergerac.

The fifth chapter describes the persecution of the Protestants in Pierre's city of birth Bergerac and how they were violently forced to either renounce their faith or flee their country. Three of the Labuscagne sons consequently decided to flee: first was Pierre's eldest brother Isaac, then his cousin Samson and later himself. The tragic history of Samson will be elaborated on in a special chapter. In the next two chapters, 7-8, I shall narrate the history of Pierre; his decision to flee his country, his stay in Frankfurt am Main in Germany, his arrival in the Netherlands, his sojourn in Enkhuizen, his marriage in Leeuwarden, his family and in-laws.

Chapter 9 describes the circumstances which caused Pierre to find employment at the *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC, United East India Company) and the hardships his wife endured in caring for herself and their children until their eventual arrival in the Cape. The closing chapter consists of a short review of the trials and tribulations of Pierre in the Cape; his arrival in the Cape, his work as a teacher, sexton and messenger of the law court, until he was allocated a piece of land in 1723 in Drakenstein (Paarl).

I am deeply indebted to Jana Moller who made a first draft of the English translation, also to my niece Dr Maryke Spruyt for her corrections, and especially to my second cousin Ansie Wilson and her husband Jos who helped me to finalize the translation.