

Chapter Twenty-Two

Gérard de Thysac and other migrants

From Jehan de Thysac and Alix came a complex family tree. There was Simon, who built la Rochère, Charles who built Belrupt, and Nicolas who carried on Lichecourt. But also they had other more adventurous children who travelled abroad, for example François, Robert and Gérard.

A younger son of a large glassmaking family would realize early in his life that his brothers would oversupply his home region, so one can see why some of them decided to travel elsewhere to ply their trade.

Gérard de THYSAC appears to have been the first glassmaker from Lorraine known in Soissonnais. He almost certainly went there for economic reasons such as the outpouring of glass in his local region. In the 15th century, the output of glass in Lorraine must have been disproportionate for the size of the dukedom with its estimated population approaching 600,000. At least 44 glassworks are documented, and, with his brothers all building their own glassworks, his incentive to remain there was small.

Glassworks Name	First Mention	Last Mention	Glassworks Name	First Mention	Last Mention
Bains	1563	1626	la Hutte	1554	1587
La Bataille	1556	1632	Jacquot	1448	1572
Belrupt	1392	1626	Leppenoux	1554	1605
Beauregard	1561	?	Lichecourt	1473	1600
Bennevisse	1407	?	La Pile	1556	1656
Finance	1524	1657	Morillon	1523	1694
Biseval	1448	?	Neufmont	1507	?
Boyvin	1524	1605	La Neuve	1563	1679
Catherine	1477	1585	Onzaines	1492	1635
Clairey	1555	1629	Rawfaing	1631?	?
Claudon	1496	1658	La Rochere	1477	1636
Couchaumont	1554	1658	Selles	1583	1620
La Frizon	1505	1658	Senennes	1521	1658
Grammont	1510	1624	Soison	1548	1548
Gruey	?	?	La Sybille	1501	1658
Hatrey	1539	1658	Tendon	1492	1512
Haudompré	1557	1644	Thiétry	1448	1622
Hautbois	1508	?	Thomas	1475	1658
Hennezel	1494	1650	Tignecourt	1554	1600
Henricel	1448	1614	Tolloy	1517	1630
Houldrichapelle	1555	1586	Torchon	1501	1621
le Humbert	1555	1573	Trois Bans	1555	1622

The table gives an impression of the density of glassworks in Lorraine. There was of course a demand for window glass in Lorraine itself. We have records of deliveries made to the Duke and to various churches. For example, in 1494 the Hennezel glassworks delivered cases of white and coloured glass for the repair of the Church windows of Remiremont while in the following year Jehan de Relange, the receiver of Darney, paid the glassmaker Claude Brisevoire 12 francs for one delivery of 160 cases of glass for Pont à Monsoon a regional palace of the Duke.

But this home market alone could not have supported all the output - it must have been good enough to export. With all the glass blowers, gatherers, cutter, teezers, founders, packers, ash sifters, crate-makers, smiths and others required, each glassworks could have employed many persons. Perhaps one in every thousand of the total population was working in glass making?

The glassmakers' charter protected Glassmaking and those covered by it, the Hennezel, Thiétry, Thisac and Bisseval families. Under its privileges these families had made good money before the market was oversupplied. We can see some evidence of their wealth today in their buildings, which still remain. The fief of Lichécourt, was granted to Jean de Thysac and the beautiful Château which still exists today, was built by his son Nicolas who owned several glassworks at Boyvin, Attigny, Lichécourt, Martinville, Passavant and Grignoncourt. Nicolas, was a glassworker himself. So Gérard clearly had good reason to look further afield, with so many glassmakers competing, even from his own family. This must have been his motive for his wanting to leave Lorraine. In this period, it was not a religious migration because Luther did not publish his first dissertation until 1517 and Gérard died in 1526.

Certainly he knew his home village was no sanctuary.. René II, when he wrote on 23 June 1476, had granted a favour to his parents, : "*Since they built the said glassworks, the wars came. They lost many of their possessions, and it was impossible for them to maintain the said glassworks at the charge of the aforesaid ten guilders per year. It is for them impossible to continue to pay due to damages that they had and sustained as a result of the war for three years in the country of Burgundy, which is next adjacent on the frontiers. They obtain reduction of the aforesaid tax of one half forever*"¹

So there were various reasons for leaving Lorraine, but it is not clear why he chose to go to the Soissonais.

After Agincourt, the duchy of Orleans suffered much misery. Continual fighting followed across the Valois with land being retaken first by the English and then in 1429 by Joan of Arc, retaken again by the English in 1431 and finally returned to France by Charles VII in 1433. Throughout this time the population diminished as it was forced to supply sustenance and taxes for the troops and yielding any hidden reserves to methodical pillagers. At the same time there was a terrible period for weather. Severe freezes were followed by famines due to continual rains and poor harvests. The population fell dramatically.

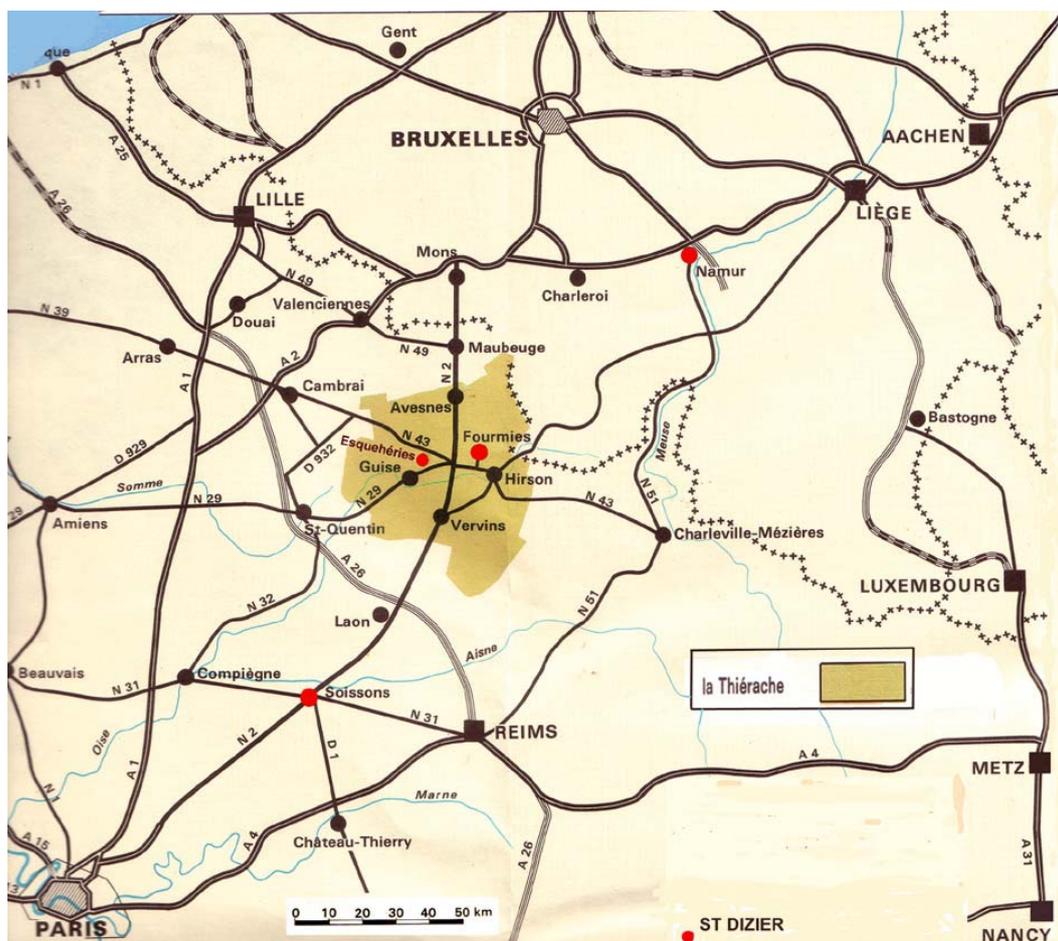
When the duke of Valois, captured at Agincourt, returned in 1440 from his captivity by the English after 25years, his astonishingly high value ransom also had to be paid. Charles sold some of his lands to raise money but tried to avoid placing further taxes on locals such as the poor peasants of Soissons. Indeed he went further and as time progressed tried to reduce the taxes in order to attract people to come back and

¹ Arch. dép. Meurthe-et-Moselle, B3 [folio] 162-3; B754, [no] 23

repopulate the Valois. It was necessary to allow deserted villages to recover their inhabitants and so bring back their crafts. Charles exonerated them of any late royalties: He practised what we might call today fiscal acquittals.

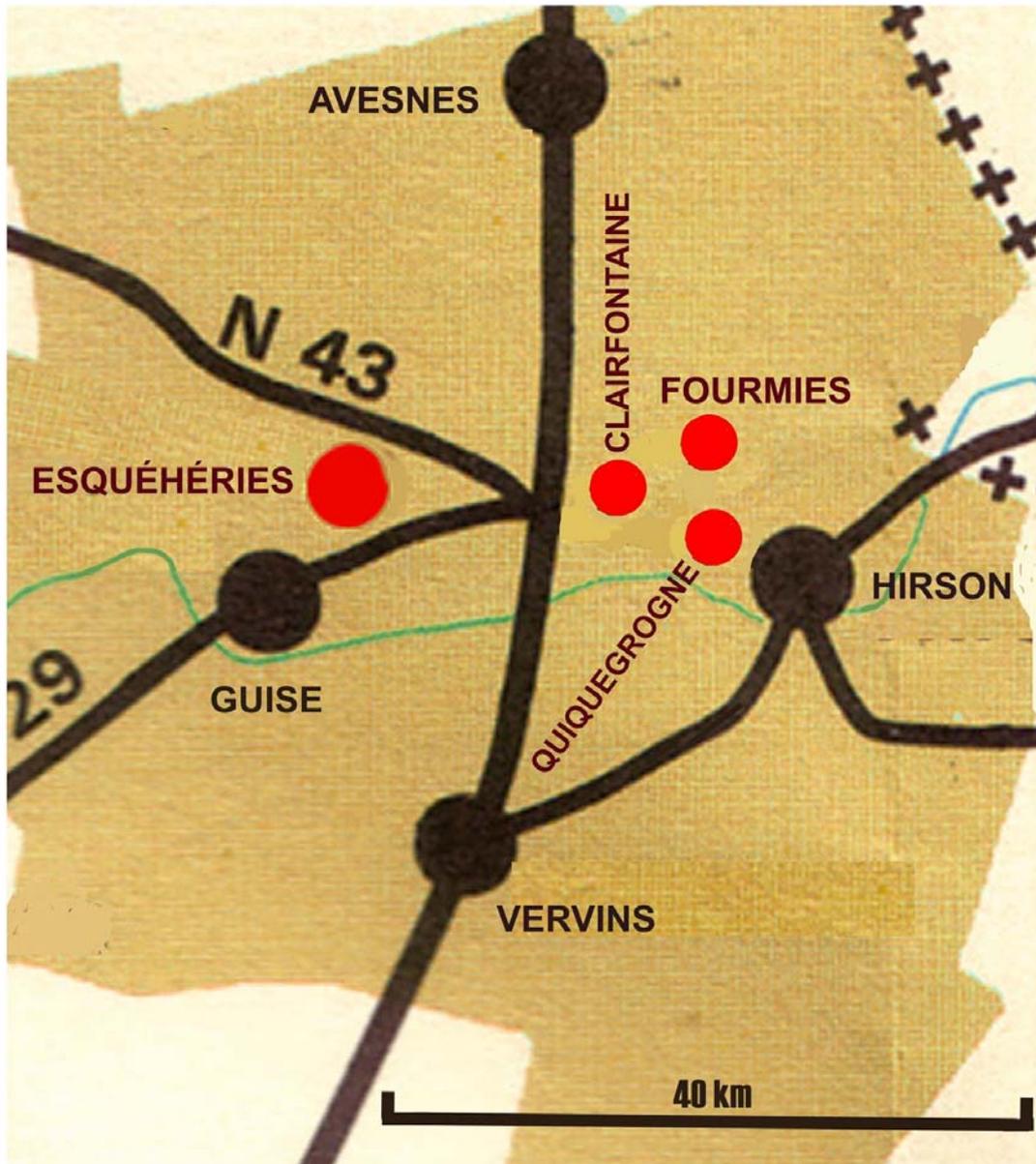
In such a situation the message would soon get out that here was a place that was giving inducements to encourage migrants.

Certainly a lot of the Hennezels went to Thiérache later and a few Thysacs also. Francis Tisacque, for example, worked in 1620 at the glasshouse of Clairefontaine. There he had followed Paul Hennezel in Paul's journey to Thiérache in Brabant. Francis Tisacque died the 14th July 1653 at the Glasshouse of the Follette, located at Namur; the act of burial gives his description as "glazier"². But we are looking for an influence earlier than that. Gérard's migration must have been between say 1490 and 1505. We know that there was a well-established glassworks, the Glassworks of Quiquengrogne, in Thiérache, which was founded at the end of the year 1290. This glassworks belonged to Prémontrés, (a religious order), of Clairefontaine³ The abbey Saint Nicolas of Clairefontaine was situated at four kilometre to the South West of Fourmies. It is not clear what was the attraction of Soissonais; but maybe it offered financial advantages.



² H. Fallon the Commune of the Namuroses - Namur 1907 p 15

³ The Glassworks of Quiquengrogne in Thiérache appears have been an important place for the meeting of Lorraine and Normandy glassworkers. Colnet (Arch. Chantilly series of Carton 45), and Bongard (AN. R4 1109 fo 375) worked there in 1568.



After the reduction of population due to plague, ground rents in the village of Vierzay (Soissonnais) were only 0.5 hectolitre of grain per hectare in 1448. By 1511 this had risen to 2 hl/ha⁴. Between 1500 and 1560 rents stayed steady at 2.5 hl/ha in Soissonnais. An alternative explanation is perhaps that at the time it was not a theatre of war.

Whatever the reason for the migration, Gérard de THYSAC was the first glassmaker from Lorraine known in Soissonnais. He was recorded as Lord of Pisseleu and Vaumière, which are close to Villers-Cotterêts⁵ and Sacconin close to Soissons.

⁴ (Le Roy Ladurie 1987:177)

⁵ Edict of Villers-Cotterêts :

Ordonnance 188 d'août 1539 prise par le Roi François Ier imposant l'usage du français dans les actes officiels et de justice enregistrée au Parlement de Paris le 6 septembre 1539

The eldest son of Gérard de THYSAC was Philippe, who was granted the lifelong use of the forest in 1527. He went into the army. The army seemed to be a recurring theme in this family. All of his recorded descendants were in the army. Whether this was because that produced a record in the archives or whether most able-bodied men had to do service in troubled times is not clear. Arthur de THYSAC, the youngest son, settled down in Thiérache in the glassworks of Faux Bâton, close to Rumigny, (1550). Arthur returned to the glassworks of Esquéhéries, after he was in the battle in Artois.

Later we find Jacques, Arthur's son, in Thiérache. Jacques dwelt at the glassworks of Esquéhéries with horses and hunting dogs.

Here is a record one of his transactions:

"Document made in the city of Guise in the month of August 1580 of the business concerning the Duchy.

.... the glassmaker of Esquéhéries has taken to rent some land that will be entered in the forest of the Novyon, beneath the hedge, to build a glassworks there, as he made, he has since let out part of this land to make return to several people who there built houses, in case by this means, the aforesaid forest is badly damaged; will be seen the lease with this fact by the Seignuer of Chailly by which one says that the aforesaid glassmaker has permission of the master, up to 25 or thirty beasts with horn in woods.⁶"

Jacques de THYSAC, again another soldier, was part of a Regiment of foot of the Captain Lalande^{7 8}.

Isaac, and Jacob, Jacque's sons, settled at Charles-Fontaine⁹ in the beginning of the 17th century¹⁰. Together with Marie de TISACQ their sister, all married three of the children of BROSSARD and Marie de LIÈGE. The BROSSARD, like the THYSAC by that time, adhered to the reform religion.¹¹.

Esquéhéries was one of the Thiérache towns with a fortified church. The Thiérache region between Northern France and Belgium, was ravaged by hordes of pillagers and the people had only one shelter; the church, so came the idea to fortify the churches.

⁶ Archives Musée Condé (Chantilly) AMC D42 n°4314 or AMC D42 n°4374

⁷ From the work of Hennezel de Ormois

⁸ July 12, 1544 During the siege of St Dizier captain Lalande was killed by a cannonball of Charles 5th's besieging army. To avoid demoralizing the defenders of Saint-Dizier, his death was kept secret.

⁹ Witnesses who deposed for the brothers THYSAC, at the time of the claiming of the glassworks of Charles-Fontaine between all the heirs, were Marc DORLODOT (the Lord of the Sarses in Rethélois, and glassmaker in VENDRESSE, spouse of Louise of CAQUERAY), living in FAVEROLLES, close to Villers-Cotterêt and Arthur VALIANT, living in ROCQUIGNY, in the Ardennes.

¹⁰ Rose Villequey, p. 443, number. 75

¹¹ Ref: Thesis G. LADAIQUE

The walled churches were built between the 16th and the 17th century, from François 1st to Louis 14th. From 1515 to 1598 there were unceasing conflicts between François and Charles 5th that caused trouble to Thiérache. During these black periods fortification of the churches and cemeteries was carried out. Some whole villages emptied. The fields were neglected and the precarious economy failed. For those who did not flee, the church, often the only strong building in the village was alone vast enough to welcome the population. Fortification made a heavy financial burden that the peasants alone could not have borne.

In 1633 Richelieu besieged the Lorraine capital, Nancy and the ducal family ran away having backed the wrong side. French and the Swedes were victorious in 1636.

Then the misfortune of soldiers was added to by pestilence and this resulted in a population just looking for survival. In misery and fear villagers, hid in the forests.

The Lord of Albestroff reported that the war, the famine and the illnesses did away with more than 80% of the population! Only 17 households remained out of 157 recorded in 1598. Nancy that counted 16,000 inhabitants in 1628 had only 5,000 of them in 1645.

Ten years later, following the Thirty years' war, much of the cultivated lands of Lorraine had been abandoned, the cities and the boroughs had lost their artisans. The landscape became uncontrolled, and because a big part of the farmed land had lost its boundaries, the plots disappeared and lands went wild.

It was necessary to repopulate these lands to restore the local economy.

In 1654, marshal La Ferté ordered the raising of the value of the currency of Lorraine and set in motion a tax reform: But the cost of the occupation troops was high and the population had to support charges, royalties and aides for the garrisons.

The task to rebuild the country remained immense. The survivors who returned to the abandoned villages ignored the manorial rights etc.. In the Vosges fire, started to clear the brambles, threatened some villages and was forbidden in 1664. The major problem was lack of manpower. Duke of Lorraine Charles IV upon his return in 1666, November 25, published this order: *"because of the desolation and ruin of villages that remain uninhabited "* the duke decides that *" all our colonels, captains, lieutenants and columbines, many foreign and others original to our country, not having any domicile, will want to establish their homes presently. We will grant them concession in the aforesaid uninhabited villages and all rights of high, middle and low justice, pensions and incomes due to us."*

The measures taken by The Ferté and by Charles IV did start a repopulation, but they were not sufficient to re-establish Lorraine's earlier levels of activity.

Steps were even taken in Switzerland to attract colonists. A Protestant's liberty to practise his cult was guaranteed. The county of Bitche welcomed Swiss and Tyrolese from 1662. But the French administrators also encourage the setting up of Picards, to compensate the installation of German-speaking immigrants.

Some immigrants also arrived in the cities. In Phalsbourg for example, which was a strong place under the control of a French garrison, more than 800 immigrants came between 1680 and 1720. Included were 131 French speakers from Lorraine.

So the relatively prosperous period to the second half of the 16th century came to an end. Philip II of Spain marched his armies through the territory, along what became known as the Spanish Road¹². Later, Cardinal Richelieu, Chief Minister of Louis XIIIth, occupied the region in order to better defend France along the natural boundary of the Rhine. It was at this time that many glasshouses closed. It was noticeable that at Glasshouse Hennezel, (in Lorraine), the Department of Taxes made frequent inspections in order to maximise income for imminent wars, mostly concerning religion. The cost of keeping the army in the field was substantial to the crown¹³.

Migrations, both permanent and seasonal became common at the end of the 16th century. These troubled the fiscal controllers who feared the tax on glassworking would not be paid anymore. It reduced in any case from 3300 francs before the wars to 2100 francs in 1596¹⁴. In 1596, they emphasized that it was not necessary to periodically close glassworks, otherwise they would become ruined and deserted. They avoided recording the absence of the glassmakers from their establishments unlike other taxpayers. Nevertheless by the mid 17th century about two thirds of the glassworks were recorded as in a state of ruin and desertion¹⁵. Such disruptions alone would force glassmakers to go somewhere else to ply their art but many became Huguenots and so encouraged their own rejection from the Duchy. A few committed murder. This was very common amongst glassmakers, judging by the number who appealed to the Duke for remission.

The glassmakers were in any case travellers - some made long trips to learn how to improve their techniques. François du Tizal went to Venice to learn “ *the art and profession of making true crystalline and other small work*”. On his return in 1505, François was granted permission by Duke René to build at La Frizon. He had to pay a very moderate tax of 3 small florins with “*exemption, bestowed at the good will of the sovereign*”. 15 years later, the glassworks of La Frizon was still free of tax.

Much later in 1613, we find David de Hennezel, showing up in Italy where he is recorded as making glass on table, approaching crystal. But David did more than bring back to Lorraine the secrets of crystal glass; he married Anne Thiétry and had a son Josué who blazed a trail to Belgium. In 1635, Josué moved from the Lorraine glassworks Claudon to Namur where he signed a contract with Robert and Nicolas de Colnet to manufacture glass by table and undertook to provide competent workers for ten years. If we accept the request of April 26th 1650, from Justice Damant of Namur, Lorraine window glassworkers were particularly sought after. In it Damant

¹² Parker, Geoffrey 1972 - The army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659; 1972.

¹³ Order of Duke Charles III dated 17 October 1567. (M.M. B 844)

¹⁴ . Arch. dép. Meurthe-et-Moselle, B 10393, rappon pour les gentilshommes verriers travaillant dans les verreries des prévôtés de Dompaire et de Damey, fol. 29.

¹⁵ Scoville, W.C. 1950 - Capitalism and French glassmakers 1640-1789; University of California 1950. (Scoville largely discounts Lorraine as a glassmaking region, probably because his study began in 1640.)

says that to persuade glassworkers from Lorraine to come, he had: *“to pay big expenses and satisfy the wishes of each; to agree to when each one wanted to begin the work at Namur, and in the end having to pay so much to the aforesaid workmen who eventually came to reside with their households in that country”*.

In a contract of December 3rd 1639 Josué again signed up six Lorraine glassmakers. It was not too difficult for him to find recruits. Manufacture at the La Pille glassworks in Lorraine had slowed some years earlier because of the departure of several glassworkers who had become Huguenots. Jérémie de Thiéry from La Pille, and his wife Philippe de Hennezel quit Lorraine and joined Jérémie's cousin Josué Thiéry from the Lorraine glasshouse of La Bataille. They became part of the *“team”* of Lorraine glassworker led by Josué de Hennezel, who worked first at the glasshouse of River Meuse, situated *“ 3 miles from Namur to the upstream, in the neighbourhood of the wood of the Marlière or Marly”*. They then worked at Namur at a glassworks situated at the Foliette, near the entrance to Bordial on the right shore of the Sambre, at the foot of the castle fortifications and they used coal as fuel.

In 1642, Josué de Hennezel went on to create a glass-works at Brussels¹⁶ and in the following year he asked for the monopoly of providing window glass in a radius of 15 miles around Brussels similar to that possessed by the Italian manufacturers of drinking glasses. In 1651 he revived the glassworks at Thy in Brabant by entering a contract of association with Thiry Lambotte, a bourgeois merchant of Namur to produce and dispose of 300 cases of window glass per week. Josué de Hennezel was granted a 9-year monopoly in 1653 by Philippe, king of Spain, both in Brussels and: elsewhere *“ where I am obeyed “!* and in which the king *“recognised Josué de Hennezel's exceptional qualities”*. This monopoly included the manufacture and sale of glass for windows by tables and quarrées in the manner of Lorraine. It was renewed in 1661 and Josué received the privilege of linking this manufacture with that of mirrors in the manner of Venice and of the grand round glass, such as were made as in Normandy.

Several years later, on the initiative of one of the team, Josué de Thiéry, the Thiétrys moved to the glasshouse of Fourmies, which was owned by the tradesman Brice du Quesne. Here again we find evidence of the high value placed on their work in the considerable inducements paid by the widow of du Quesne¹⁷.

Another Lorrainer with restless feet was Paul Hennezel, of the Hennezel glassworks. Concerned about his possessions in Lorraine, he asked for permission from the duke in 1618 to work in the Duchy of Brabant for 12 years. He presented a request to hold, a glassworks during twelve years that he claimed to have constructed.

¹⁶ Van Houtte, Hubert 1920 - Histoire économique de la Belgique à la fin de l'Ancien Régime; Gand 1920 p131

¹⁷ The widow of Quesne asked Josué to arrange the glassworkers of Namur to come to Fourmies *“to the furnace and to manufacture windows by table in two month or about”*. She offered the glassworkers a congenial lodging, and a good salary *“while they worked and when they will remain without working”* and take to her burden the expenses of travel going and returning. (Arch. State Namur- Minutes J. Tilman)

He claimed it was in the economic interest of Lorraine and that he was preventing others from building there.

According to the advisers of the Chamber of the Accounts, his glassworks did not deserve relief; the duke refused, for six years, to grant a reduction of the tax, to glassworks Hennezel in the Vôge, and he was not free to desert Lorraine. However, to avoid his hostility a compromise allowed Hennezel to farm his tax for six years, and work from October to January in Brabant, but for the eight remaining months in Lorraine¹⁸. After the first six years he was later given his remaining six years in 1624¹⁹. So he built a glassworks in Brabant for window glass, located at Baisy-Thy that produced the panes for the stained glass windows of the Chapel Notre Dame in the church of the Cordeliers of Namur. By 1630 Paul, although still absent from Lorraine, clearly became insecure for his property back there and instructed his son Pierre Hennezel to make property sales in his name²⁰.

At that time Pierre Hennezel had just returned from Thiérache.

Paul was probably well aware that the theatre of the Thirty Years War, up till then mostly fought elsewhere, was getting too close. He was right! In 1631 Richelieu besieged Lorraine.

We have concentrated on those who emigrated to Thiérache, Namur and Brussels but of course many went to England, as earlier chapters of this book have described.

In addition to their involvement with the European glass industry, described in this chapter, Lorrainers were fundamental to the later English window glass industry.

Although the Lorraine glasshouses of Lichecourt, Belrupt, Houldrichapelle, were , largely in ruins after the 30 years war, they nevertheless provided many of the craftsmen who built the later English industry. La Rochère, somehow survived in France and still makes glass today. Much has been written elsewhere about the decisive influence that the Lorrainers had on the window glass industry of Great Britain.

¹⁸ . Arch. dép. Meurthe-et-Moselle. B 10415, fol. 53. année 1618, rappon pour Paul de Hennezel résidant aux verreries du bailliage de Vosges.

¹⁹ Authorization 25th April 1624 (M.M. Reg. L.P. B88 f 141)

²⁰ Contracts on 9th March 1630 and 28th December 1630 See minutes Fr. Pernot – official scrivener to Darney.

Genealogy of Thysac
of Darney
with approximate dates

