

## FARMHOUSE 'PAKKEBIER' AT DALE

by John Howard Somsen [2353]

*Last year when I returned to the Netherlands for the second time, I wanted to find out exactly where my branch (Jan Hendrick, [1881]) had lived prior to emigrating to America. Derk Somsen, Zwolle [130] told me that it was one of the as yet unanswered questions but that he thought that it might have been from Dale, just north of Aalten. After a quick lesson in how to be a 'Somsen hunter', Theo Somsen [227] and I set off early one morning to see just what we could discover.*

Our first stop was the archives in Aalten's town hall. We were very fortunate to catch Peter Meerdink, Chief Archivist, who was instrumental in the original searches. He graciously took time from his very busy schedule to assist us.



*r.-l.: Peter Meerdink, Chief Archivist, Town of Aalten, John Howard Somsen Jr. [2353]*

Starting with the fact that Jan Hendrick had emigrated in 1881, we searched the census records for Dale in 1870-1880. Eureka! There it was – the arrival at Dale 27a of my great-grandfather and his family.

Next we turned to the records for 1880-1890 and found them again along with a notation that they had left for America. Great, but where is Dale 27a? There is no such address in present day Dale. In order to find it, we needed to trace the



*John Howard Somsen Jr. [2353]*

neighbors on either side:

Assink at Dale 26 and Schreurs at Dale 27. We were very fortunate that these neighbors remained in these homes for generations so that we could trace the many address changes to the present day.

After a careful search, we found Pakkebierweg on a map of Dale and set off by car to find it. It took a while to get to it because it was on the far side of a brook from the main road and had to be accessed down a long dirt road.



*Pakkebierweg (top arrow)  
Somsenhuis (bottom arrow)*

Evening discussion at the 'Pakkebier' farm with:

- Gerrit Jan Rensink, 54 year-old, present owner,
- Rina Rensink-Wamelink, wife, from Vragender,
- Nicoline Rensink, his daughter,
- Pieter Rensink, his son.
- And with the chairman of the Somsen Foundation: - Theodorus Dirk Frederik (Theo) Somsen [227]
- and John Howard Somsen Jr. [2353], Advisor and writer of this article.

Gerrit Jan Rensink's information came from his late father, Jan Willem Rensink.

#### Census Records, Dale

|           |                                |  |                                  |
|-----------|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1880-1890 | 26<br>Assink                   | 27a<br>Somsen                                  | 27<br>Schreurs                   |
| 1881      |                                | Pakkebie                                       |                                  |
| 1890-1900 | 26                             | 27   | 28                               |
| 1900-1910 | 28                             | 29   | 30                               |
| 1908      |                                | Hoftijzer                                      | Schreurs Jr.                     |
|           | 38                             | 39   | 40                               |
|           | 41                             | 42   | 43                               |
| 1919      |                                | Helmink  |                                  |
| 1920-1930 | 33                             | 34   | 35                               |
| ca. 1950  | 'Wilpshof<br>Welpshof<br>weg 4 | Helmink<br>'Pakkebie<br>'<br>Pakkebie<br>weg 1 | 'Boombek'<br>'Vellegen<br>dijk 2 |

His information is in regular type, *our comments are italicised.*

Jan Hendrik Rauwerdink built the house.

*Perhaps the father and / or brothers of Janna Hendrika Somsen-Rauwerdink [309] in 1878, since Jan Hendrik Somsen [308] paid taxes on it for the first time according to Peter Meerdink.*

It must have always been owned, not rented, property.

In July 1881, the farm was sold to Pakkebie after whom it is still named. In Dutch, 'Pakkebie' literally means 'Have a beer'.

*Indeed, we agree because Jan and Janna emigrated to America at that time.*

In 1908, the farm was sold to Hoftijzer because Pakkebie had no direct descendants. Hoftijzer's wife was a niece of Pakkebie. When Hoftijzer bought the farm it was about 3 hectares or 30,000 square meters.

In 1923, Jan and Janna Somsen came back from America for a visit.

*We agree, except the year was 1912 when they returned to settle Janna's father's estate. This was their only trip back to the Netherlands.*

In 1919, the farm was sold to Helmink. Helmink worked for many years in Germany (Düsseldorf) and was married to Mrs. Helmink - Rosenbaum, a German.

The couple Helmink - Rosenbaum had a daughter who married Jan Willem Rensink, parents of the present owner, Gerrit Jan Rensink.

Jan Willem Rensink died seven years ago in



*The rear side of Pakkebie*

1995. His wife is still alive and lives in her part of the house, which was added in the 1950's. She was born in this house.

The original house still stands although it has been greatly remodelled. The original parts of the house are:

- The tiles on the fireplace
- The sleeping chamber, which is now a very small dining room
- The floor tiles, moved from the living room to the entrance;
- the ones in the other sleeping room are covered by carpet.
- The rear of the house, with the openings of the large door, the hayloft, the small door.

*So far our evening discussion.*

Gerrit Jan isn't a farmer, he works elsewhere. He has lived with his family on the farm since 1971. Noline presented us with an aerial photo of the

farm and its surrounding area. The hayfield below the farm still belongs to the farm.

Gerrit Jan Rensink planted all the beautiful trees (beeches) along the road to the farmhouse.

The 'Slingebeek' is the brook running along the side of the property.

The road is called **Pakkebierweg**, (*photo*) the bridge is called Pakkebierbrug and the farm is called **Pakkebier**.



Gerrit Jan possesses a painting of the farm done on a wooden panel.

It was painted ca. 1942, World War II, by a hidden patriot. His name is probably Hagenbeek, but the signature is not legible.



*The painting*

This is the end of a successful search for a historic Somsenfarm. ■

### JUST LOOK AT ME...!

Teun Hunse [68] proudly shows his enormous catch.

From his place of residence, *St. Catherines*, ON Canada, he visited his children and grandchildren in July 2001. They went to **Baptiste Lake**, about 220 miles north east of Toronto.

And, indeed, fishing was a great success. And this is not an exaggeration.



As we can see in the picture it was a real big one. There is a perch in Teun's net weighing about four Canadian pounds.

A very generous dinner indeed. We hope you had a good recipe, Teun.

I wish I could have been there... ■

Gree van DS