



Somsen

HORIZON

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Message from the Chairman

Monument for the Phoenix

Jan and Anna Somsen-Kemink
in Baldwin

Jan and Anna Somsen-Kemink

The miracle of the Somsenhuus
De Bark

The 140.000 "Holland" families

Old farm life at Somsen on
'De Snieder'

In memory of Don Allen Somsen

Mien Somsen 100 years old

Family files



Cassie Huizenga Festivalqueen 2011 Orange City, Iowa

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Lay-out: Harry Somsen [146]

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Objective of the Foundation

The aim of the foundation is:

To preserve and promote the solidarity between people bearing the family name of Somsen, those who are/were related to them or those who are interested in them.

The foundation will try to achieve this object for example by:

- doing historical research into the family history and the history of the region
- collecting documentation and genealogical data
- keeping and taking charge of a family archive and data bases
- publishing a periodical
- providing information to persons, institutions and official authorities
- organising activities so as to realise the object of the foundation.

Cover Festivalqueen 2011 Orange City, Iowa. Cassie Huizinga

Foreword



Johan Somsen [1089]

You will find number 35 of our Somsen Horizon. A digital version.

A lot has happened within the current board, which consists of Harry Somsen, Theo Somsen and myself. Harry and I have been struck by illness and that leads to certain consequences. I have deep respect for how Harry, diligent as ever, has also made the layout of this issue. Just great!

Due to the above circumstances, we are diligently looking for family members who want to join the board. It is not that much work, but we would like it very much if this work could be continued. Since 1997, for 26 years, we have been working on our family history and as far as we are concerned, it should take much longer.

Another major change is that we have decided to no longer publish our magazine in print. This saves us a lot of costs and that has the pleasant consequence that we no longer have to ask for an annual contribution from you. Of course, contributions and, for example, legacies from you are still welcome, but there is less financial pressure for us and we are very happy with that.

To ensure that our magazine reaches as many people as possible, we ask you to send us **all e-mail addresses from your family circle**. Even from those who are not donors.

It remains for me to emphasize my thanks to Theo, because in these years that our board has been so thin, he has been the driving force to ensure that this magazine has come into being.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Johan Somsen [1089]

Only a future with a good place for history

by Bernhard Harfsterkamp



Wencke and Aidrian Ligtenbarg unveil the Phoenix monument together with Mayor Bengevoord. Photo: Bernhard Harfsterkamp

Winterswijk

Almost 170 years after the disaster with the steamship The Phoenix on Lake Michigan, a monument has been unveiled in the old cemetery at the Singelweg in memory of the people from Winterswijk and other people from the Achterhoek who died then. Henk te Kulve of the Historical Circle Kotten said that it is also a memorial sign to all the people from Winterswijk who left for America in the 19th century. Mayor Joris Bengevoord, who unveiled the monument, said that "we still feel connected to the victims".

In search of

Both Henk te Kulve and the mayor saw parallels with today, because even in the present day many people leave their own country in search of a better life elsewhere. "That was true back then, too. Expectant and curious, many people from Winterswijk went to America." In the period 1840 – 1890, 2700 people emigrated from Winterswijk. The reasons were great poverty, but religion also played a role. Not everyone felt free enough to practice their own faith anymore. In 1847 many people left from all over the Achterhoek. They were encouraged to do so by the first group, which had left in 1843. Their messages home contained positive stories about the new country.

Almost reached

Many people from Winterswijk settled in American states such as New York, Ohio and Michigan and in Ontario, Canada. It was a journey full of hardships. First to Arnhem, then by barge to Rotterdam, across the ocean and finally a trip through America. Not everyone survived the journey. The group that boarded the steamship Phoenix had almost reached its final destination. But at two o'clock in the night of November 21, 1847, tragedy struck. A fire broke out on the 33-metre-long ship. Because there were too few lifeboats, only 41 people of the approximately 210 passengers survived. The others ended up in the lake water, which was too cold. There were 74 casualties who came from Winterswijk, including 25 people from the hamlet of Kotten. The names of the 151 victims from the Achterhoek are on one side of the memorial plaque designed by Arjan Ligtenbarg. The other side provides information about and an impression of the disaster.

View

The news of the disaster did not reach the Netherlands until months later. Winterswijk appeared to be the worst affected. Because the Historical Society of Kotten was intensively involved in the emigration, the initiative for the Phoenix monument arose. The old cemetery, which was in full use in the 19th century, turned out to be the logical place for it. "It's harsh to say, but if the shipwreck victims had stayed in Winterswijk, they would have been buried here," Te Kulve said. "With a view of old dear Winterswijk." The mayor emphasized that there can only be a good future for Winterswijk with a good place for its history. He then unveiled the monument together with Aidrian and Wencke Ligtenbarg.

Winterswijk

For the first time, a remnant of the notorious ship the Phoenix, which sank in the United States on November 21, 1847, has been found. On that steamer were 154 Dutch emigrants - 84 of whom were people from Winterswijk - who wanted to seek refuge in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

The ship caught fire on Lake Michigan six miles before reaching its final destination. The boat sank to the bottom of the icy lake. Of the 154 Dutch passengers, who hoped for a better life on the other side of the Pacific Ocean, only 24 people survived the shipwreck. Ten of them came from Winterswijk.

Monday, November 21, 2022, it was exactly 175 years that the infamous ship sank.

Chimney

For years, they searched in vain for the remains of the ship. Nothing was ever found, until this summer. Then the ship's chimney was found at the bottom of the lake.



All this happened after podcast maker Joske Meerdink of *Broadcaster Gelderland* - born and raised in Winterswijk - accidentally stumbled upon the story of the Phoenix. During an evening walk in her village in the winter of 2020, she came across the monument for the disaster. The monument tells about the shipwreck of 1847. On the back are all kinds of well-known Winterswijk surnames.

She was surprised that she didn't know the story. Meerdink noticed that the Phoenix disaster was also relatively unknown to her fellow villagers. For her, that was the moment to decide to dive into the story and take a plane to the United States.



The Forgotten Titanic of the Achterhoek Filmmaker Diny van Hoften made a documentary with the same name, in which it can be seen that the disaster still makes a big impression on the descendants of survivors of the disaster. Together with shipwreck hunter Steve Radovan, they searched for the chimney and it became clear which Dutch influences can still be found in Wisconsin to this day.

Phoenix Disaster Part 1 & 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hs8T4XLGAys> P1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGY2RABdETU> P2

Phoenix tragedy of 1847 in Lake Michigan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sR5kPv6VK8U>

Jan and Anna in Baldwin, Wisconsin (part 1)

by Theo Somsen [227]

Jan and Anna Somsen-Kemink from Amsterdam visited their first cousins in 1949. Descendants of Somsens and Keminks from the Achterhoek (Gelderland), who once emigrated to the United States and Canada.



Jan and Anna Somsen-Kemink in Baldwin 1949

First, they visited Anna's family in Michigan, then Jan's family in Wisconsin, and finally Anna's family in Canada. Jan and Anna kept a diary about this period of almost three months: 31 May - 22 August 1949. Starting in this Newsletter, we publish excerpts from their diary.

Thursday 30 June 1949

We have to drive about 140 miles this day, which is a piece of cake compared to the previous days. We pass several villages and go on long roads along farms and fields. Then there is a sign that reads: *Welcome to Baldwin*. Our excitement rises: now we will see the Somsen families who have written so often that we had to come.

Up hill, down hill. To the left of the road at a crossroads is the Christian Reformed Church amongst the farms, about 20 minutes walk from the village.

The village itself is so quiet under the green trees.

Claude Kemink (Claude and Jenny Kemink, host family in Grand Haven Michigan.) now wants to know the name of the street, but I cannot have to give him the answer, because they never wrote it to me. So we ask a woman who is standing behind the house and she shows us the street, and then the third or fourth house. Claude looks for that street and sure enough, there is the house. Claude drives the car to the garage behind the house, walks to the front door, knocks but gets no answer. Walks to the back door and sure enough, there comes Jenny (*Jenny, Dina, Ella and Herman Somsen: first cousins of Jan Somsen*) who opens the door, followed by Dina.

Both cousins are happy to see us. Above all, however, we long for a refreshing bath, which we take immediately.

And then we sit down quietly. We will enjoy the dinner, which will soon be served.



l-r: Jenny S + Dena S + Anna S-Kemink + Doris S-Wahl + Ella S + Shirley S [2711]

Yes, one notices that some habits and customs from Gelderland have been left behind, which is pleasant to us.

They ask me to lead in prayer and end with thanksgiving and read from the Dutch Bible of Uncle Jan (*Jan Hendrik Somsen and Janna Rauwerdink emigrated in 1851 to Baldwin. Both parents of o.a. Jenny, Dina, Ella and Herman.*

Jan Hendrik was a brother of Derk Somsen from Aalten, father of Jan Somsen.) and Aunt Janna.

The cousins, just like us, are very happy that we are here and that we can see each other face to face after so much correspondence. It is precisely what Dina wrote: we have prayed to meet each other, and the Lord has answered our prayers.

After dinner, Claude lets me light a cigarette and we rest a bit.

Now let's all go to Woodville, to Harry Somsen. It's not that far from here, so we'll be there within fifteen minutes.

Too bad, the family is not at home and so we go back home.

Around four o'clock, Claude and Jenny Kemink return to their home in Michigan via Milwaukee and Muskegon. Together we have covered 1150 miles in the past few days, quite a distance and how big and beautiful everything we got to see was.

We say goodbye to each other, thank Claude and Jenny very much for everything they did for us in the past three weeks and that was a lot. We owe them a lot of gratitude.

Now there are four of us together, Jenny and Dina and both of us. We talk and laugh with each other as if we have known each other for years. It's great that we can talk to them in the vernacular of The Achterhoek!

Around six o'clock Herman and Ella come home. After a warm greeting, we will go at the table.

Dina asks me to lead the table and read from the bible as long as we are with them because, she says, we understand Dutch well. I hope to comply with this request.



John Henry S + Jan S + Herman S
suffers from joint rheumatism.

In the evening we drive around, cousin Edward is has a barbershop. I say to Dinah, who is driving the car: let me go there for a while, then you should see how he reacts. I walk into the shop, he looks at me, takes me in again, then looks outside and then suddenly says: "Ha, John!" and shakes my hand. It is a pity that he is deaf and



Edward S (Ed) in his barbershop

We talk a bit and, in the meantime, I ask him if he wants to cut my hair. Of course, he wants to and so after a while I leave him completely modernized. He has already closed his shop. The servant has already gone home. He prepares the cash register and then goes home.

I saw some portraits of his wife, who died two months before. In the evening, the other cousins and some children come to say hello. Yes, you still recognize them a bit from the portraits of the past.

We spend the rest of the evening pleasantly together and at 12 o'clock we all go to bed gratefully and thank Him for the great privilege He gave us and made us enjoy.

To be continued

Jan and Anna Somsen-Kemink



Jan Willem Somsen [352] was born in Aalten in 1892. He started as a carpenter, became a customs officer in Zeeland for a few years in 1916 and then, until 1957 he was a tax bailiff in Amsterdam. After his retirement, he moved from Amsterdam to Dinxperlo. He died in 1974.



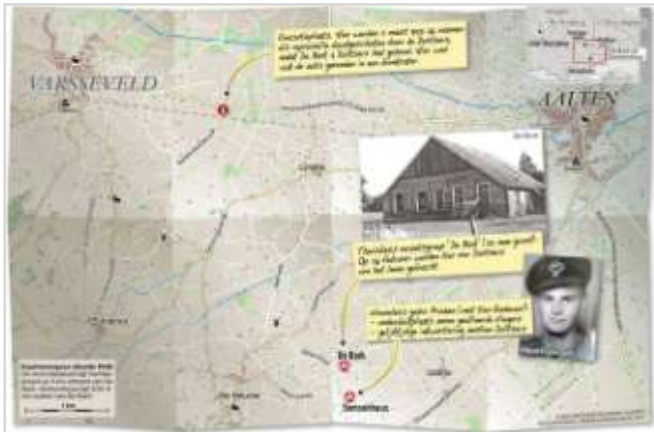
Jan Somsen on his 40th anniversary in office in 1956, in the midst of his colleagues: Amsterdam tax bailiffs.

Johanna Frederika (Anna) Kemink [353] was born in 1893 in Dinxperlo. She married Jan in 1920, died in 1992 and was buried in Dinxperlo with her husband. Their marriage remained childless. Jan and Anna were real family people, who never missed an opportunity to show their interest and sympathy.

You couldn't ignore them because generously and frequently they invited many to celebrating their own celebrations!

The miracle of the Somsenhuus with sixteen Germans in the stable

by Hennie Haggeman



© Marcel Kuster, Photo: National Hiding Museum Aalten

Almost every citizen of the Achterhoek knows how the resistance group De Bark dealt with four German soldiers and that in retaliation 46 men lost their lives at Rademakersbroek. It seems forgotten what followed: how seven Allied pilots kept quiet for days in the attic with German soldiers billeted under them.

Truida, the 21-year-old blond eldest daughter of the Prinzen family, goes unseen every day with a bucket filled with food up a staircase into the attic above the part of the farm at the Westendorpweg near IJzerlo. She always returns with a bucket full of human excrement.

Down in the stables there are sixteen (!) German soldiers. Until the day – 28 March 1945 – that they were looking for a safe haven against the approaching British troops, the Germans did not know what was going on above their heads.



Parachute

Frank Dell is one of the seven (!) pilots who found themselves in the precarious situation in the attic of the Somsenhuus during the weeks in March 1945. Dell was shot down over Münster on 20 October 1944 and saved himself with a parachute. After a five day walk,

© Collection, national Hiding Museum in Aalten.

he ended up in the Achterhoek. The British RAF pilot Frank Dell is on the attic with four American, one

Canadian and one Australian pilot who had a similar adventure.

The seven look through the cracks of the attic into the stable. During the day, the downstairs neighbors are usually out and about. But in the evening they see and hear the German soldiers. Gradually, they know the Germans by name.

Bizarre addition

At the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945, the Allied pilots all found shelter in the Somsenhuus, the farm of the Prinzen family. Bernard and Dora have ten (!) children, of whom Truida is the eldest. A bizarre addition shows that when everyone is at home, the Somsenhuus is populated with 35 people: the family of twelve, the seven Allied pilots and the sixteen billeted German soldiers who are not allowed to know what is going on above their heads.

In 2023, the story of the Somsenhuus is barely told. It can only be found in old articles by De Gelderlander and De Graafschapbode. Every year between 1945 and the turn of the century, there is reason for the newspapers to write an article about the Somsenhuus and De Bark and the resistance group that hides a few hundred meters to the north in an empty farmhouse.

Barkians

The resistance group consisted of 25 to 30 men (called Barkians), some of whom came from the Achterhoek and went into hiding to escape the *Arbeitseinsatz* (slave labour in Germany).

A number of men come from elsewhere in the country, including the leaders Jan Ket (Leeuwarden) and Henk van 't Lam (Haarlem). The group also consists of two German soldiers who deserted from Alsace, two Poles and a Frenchman.



Jan Ket (left) with Prince Bernhard.

© Westmeijer Collection

Since Saint Nicolas 1944, the resistance group has been living in the empty farmhouse, which they have baptized De Bark. The group is in close contact with the Prinzen family of the Somsenhuus and the airmen who find shelter there. The pilots were used to give the Barkians a military training.

The resistance group was active in droppings of

weapons and prepared to assist the Allied liberators in the future.

Reunion

After the war, the pilots and the Barkians met almost every year for a reunion, during which De Bark was also visited initially. Journalists from newspapers were always there. This results in articles that invariably describe how Dell crashed over Münster and ended up in the Achterhoek after a five-day walk. And about the strange situation in the Somsenhuus where the seven pilots can't afford a cough with the Germans under them.

Remarkably enough, these articles almost never mention the killing of the four German soldiers and the subsequent reprisal at Rademakersbroek. It was only after the last reunion (autumn 1994) that this changed. The more Barkians die, the more space there is to tell the different, much more dramatic and controversial story, it seems.

Omerta

The increasing interest in Rademakersbroek (fuelled by the book *De Bark* by journalist Bill Bilderbeek in 1995) caused the question to become louder and louder as to what exactly led to the death of the four German soldiers. This was kept silent for a long time, the Barkians use a kind of omerta.



The monument with the 46 names at Rademakersbroek. In Varsseveld

In 1982, Winterswijk researcher Henk Krosenbrink tried to gain clarity. He went to visit Ket and Van 't Lam. They met in the villa - again called De Bark - of Ket near Amersfoort. Ket and Van 't Lam say they regret what happened to the 46 men who were shot, but that it was not in vain. The four Germans had maps with them showing the locations for anti-aircraft artillery. Information that, according to the two, ensured that the Allies could enter the Achterhoek without a fight. Without maps, there would have been far more than 46 casualties, according to the two.

The Germans also have wives and children.

Regarding the death of the four, Ket and Van 't Lam

only say that they were hanged. It wasn't until 2014 that Dell's book *Mosquito Down!* breaks the silence about it. Dell writes that he tried to persuade Ket and Van 't Lam to change their minds by pointing out that the Germans also had wives and children at home. In vain. The pilots did not take part in the hanging, which was not very gentle. "They slowly strangled," Dell writes.

After the fusillade at Rademakersbroek, the resistance group did not dare to return to De Bark. They hid elsewhere until the arrival of the Allies, first in the crawl space of an agricultural barn in IJzerlo. The airmen do return to the Somsenhuus. It soon becomes busier than they would like. Miraculously, the Germans never got wind of the hidden Allies just above their heads. On the morning of 28 March, the Germans were gone and the liberators were on their way.



Truida Lammers with her husband Hendrik in 2007 in front of the Somsenhuus, which was newly built in the sixties. © Michel Beskers

Lightning

Of the Barkians, 78 years later, probably no one is still alive. Truida, the eldest daughter of the Prinzen family, was visited by Dell amongst others until well after the turn of the century. She died in 2017. The last witness is Dell himself. The pilot, who lived in Australia, died in May 2022 at the age of 98.

If you look for what remains of the past in 2023, you will not find De Bark. The farm, which was at what is now the Gelkinkweg, was demolished in the 1970s. The Somsenhuus is located at the Westendorpweg but has been rebuilt. In June 1945, lightning struck the farmhouse. When the building permit was not granted (buildings with war damage went first), Bernard and Dora emigrated to Canada three years later with almost all their children.

But Rademakersbroek is there as a reminder.



And especially the monument with the names of the 46 men on it

The Bark and Rademakersbroek



The Bark, the old farm in which the resistance group lived. © archive

The relative silence around De Bark was disturbed on Sunday 26 February 1945. Three German soldiers wander around and in the farmhouse. They may see items that indicate habitation. The resistance group does not trust it. When the Germans leave, they were caught by the resistance fighters. They also capture a fourth German soldier who is standing by his vehicle further away.

In De Bark feverish deliberation ensues: what to do with the four? Frank Dell and his companions, the Allied pilots who were nearby in the Somsenuus, were also called in. Eventually, the Germans were hanged. To get rid of the corpses, an accident is staged. The German army vehicle containing the four soldiers was driven into a bomb crater ten kilometers away (near Rademakersbroek between Aalten and Varsseveld) and detonated. Unfortunately, the explosion was only half the work.

Moments later, German soldiers discover the vehicle. When they find stretch marks on the necks of their four comrades-in-arms, they sound the alarm.

Early in the morning on Friday 2 March, trucks stop at Rademakersbroek. There are forty-six men –death candidates - who are imprisoned on De Kruisberg in Doetinchem. The forty-six were led into the field and shot in reprisal.

For more information about the people who died and who came from Aalten and surroundings, see the link below:

<https://oudzelhem.eu/index.php/2e-wereldoorlog/wereldoorlog-2e/32-wereldoorlog-2e/2e-wereldoorlog/verhalen-2e-wereldoorlog/1029-rademakersbroek-drama>

America's 140,000 Holland families

It's one of the nation's most used surnames

There is a Holland Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. But there's also a Holland Center in Omaha, Nebraska. At The Holland Center in Corvallis, Oregon, they crack your bones, they're chiropractors. In Inverness, Florida, just outside Orlando, the Holland Center is not populated by bone crunchers but by muscle pinchers, it's a center of masseurs. And in Gentry, Arkansas, they don't call it Holland Center, but Holland Venue. They have an old barn there, a Dutch barn, and that's where you can get married, on Holland Avenue. America counts 29 cities and towns named Holland. It has 12 Amsterdams and 54 towns and counties with the name Orange or Nassau in them. All references to the Dutch, and each the result of an official decision. But privately, the name is even much more common, very much more common. America counts 140,000 families carrying the surname Holland, more than anywhere else in the world, and a hundred times more than in the Netherlands itself.

THE HOLLAND Center in Nebraska is a concert hall, built after a donation from a Mr. Peter Kiewit, a contractor and descendant of Jan Kiewit from The Hague.



New York's Holland Tunnel

Holland Center sounds better than Kiewit Center, and thus honors the generous giver equally well. Then again, the Holland Center in Oregon with the chiropractors has nothing to do with the Dutch. It's merely named after Dr. Rod Holland. It could also have been named after his fellow practice owner Dr. Hollie Hixson. But Holland rolls off the tongue, easier to remember than Hixson.

Ask a New Yorker for the fastest way to get from Manhattan to New Jersey, and she'll say, "Take the Holland Tunnel."

The name Holland in America is as old as America itself because, after all, the Dutch founded the country. For anyone who came to America as a non-Dutch immigrant, the name was one of the first words they picked up, regardless of what language they spoke.

This also helps to explain the huge number of American street names with Holland in them: Holland

Road, Street, Avenue, Circle, Lane, Court, Way, Alley, and so on. A few blocks from my home runs Holland Street, but across town is yet another Holland Street. And when you drive from here to Bar Harbor on the coast, you'll spot the Holland Inn from afar, a Bed & Breakfast on yet another Holland Avenue.

AT THE HOLLAND Clinic in Albuquerque, New Mexico, they help you lose your excess pounds, compliments of dr. Mark Holland. But in Orem, Utah, no one can explain to you why the business complex on Orem Boulevard was given the name Holland Square. Probably, you'll be told, because everybody can remember that name.

In Arizona you have to ask around, but eventually they'll tell you there that Scottsdale's Holland Center became a community center because rich Mr. George Holland made a large donation to get it done. Holland Roofing, on the other hand, headquartered in Cincinnati with dozens of offices east of the Rocky Mountains, is downright Dutch in origin. Founder Hans Philippo hails from South Holland.

Accountant Holland in Ohio, dentist Holland in California, the Holland waste collectors in Pennsylvania, lawyer Holland in Missouri, butcher Holland in New Jersey - even the Dealy Plaza overpass witness who watched JFK get shot was a guy named Sam Holland.



There are 5,000 people in America with the surname Germany, 16,000 are named France, and 40,000 Americans carry England as a last name. Three countries, with a combined population of 200 million. Holland on the other hand houses not

even 20 million Dutchmen, and yet there are those whopping 140,000 American Holland families.

Thanks to Willem Meiners from Old Town, Maine. Send an email to dutchtouch@dutchtouchnieuwsbrief.com and from now on you are assured of his weekly Newsletters for free!

Old farm life at Somsen at 'De Snieder'

by Erik Somsen [701]

Historic perspective

In my book *Vrogger Thuus* (2018, sold out) I describe my childhood memories of life at the farm 'De Snieder' in the Aalten hamlet of Lintelo between 1950 and 1970. It was the post-war period in the protected environment of a traditional peasant family, neighborly help and the Christian Reformed pillar in society. The book describes a picture of the time and atmosphere of what in retrospect was an interesting transitional period between traditional peasant life of the past and the end of the twentieth century.



*The Snieder Farm in Lintelo in 1996.
Foto from Somsen Omnes Generations*

Farm life in my childhood still followed the fixed rhythm of day and seasons. The people were close to nature, farm life depended on it. The old-fashioned mixed farming was a form of sustainable circular agriculture: the manure from the cattle went back to the place where the fodder grew. This completes the circle and closes the cycle.

Reverence for creation and connection to the soil were core values.

The mixed farm was also a real family business where father and mother, we as children and grandparents lived under one roof and carried out all the common work on the farm together.

In busy times, with haymaking, harvesting and threshing, the neighbors helped each other and also in case of birth, illness or mourning, the neighbors assisted each other with advice and help. Cooperation and a sense of community were core values in our community.

But from the sixties onwards there were major changes, both in agriculture and at 'De Snieder'. Our farming became more rational and intensive with economies of scale, mechanization and specialization. New farming methods were introduced with more cows and pigs on slurry pits, more artificial fertilizers and chemical pesticides. The horse was replaced by a tractor and modern machinery and land consolidation was introduced.

Our family also benefited from the new times, we got telephone, shower, toilet, car, refrigerator and TV. Because of all these modern means, everything in our lives and in the life around us has changed. From the 1960s onwards, there was a major cultural change, with individualization, secularization and materialism.

When I look back, I am always amazed by the developments in that period, both in society and in agriculture. In a short period of time, society developed from closed, religious to open, secular and farming was transformed from handicraft to industrial, aimed at efficiently producing as much food as possible at a low price.

But all these developments also came at a price. The sense of community became less, people became more individualistic and materialistic. The historically developed small-scale landscape, natural values and soil have been affected and a strong levelling has occurred. Now, after more than fifty years, it seems high time for a change of course. Circular agriculture is once again being rediscovered as the new perspective for Dutch agriculture.

Circular agriculture minimizes the emission of harmful substances, contributes to the improvement of biodiversity, soil and landscape, and uses raw materials and energy sparingly.

You can't go back to the past, but you can try to understand it and learn from it and draw inspiration from it.



Erik Somsen [701] 16 yr. 'De Snieder'

When I look back from the present at the old farm life on 'De Snieder' in my childhood, I realize the prosperity we live in, but also what we have lost. The values we were taught then may help us to move into the future with confidence.

I would like to share with you in this Somsen Horizon a short summary from my book about the old farm life of my childhood with Somsens at the 'De Snieder' farm,

all year round. A story about simple, hard-working people who felt connected to the land and had reverence for creation, cooperation and community as core values.

Rhythm of the day



Arnold Jan Somsen [495] with the dump cart in front of the house.

Life in our home followed a more or less fixed pattern. The day started at half past six in the morning. Father and mother, (*Arent Jan [495] married on 29-09-1948 to Wilhelmina Luiten [497]*), first milked the cows. In winter in the cowshed in the building and in summer outside in the meadow. Milking was done by hand; it wasn't until the sixties that a milking machine came to us. Meanwhile, grandma (*Hendrika Wilhelmina Tammel [491]*) baked the pancakes for the whole family on the wood-fired stove. After breakfast, mother read a passage from the children's Bible. Then we went to school. In the morning, father and grandfather (*Frederik Jan Somsen [486]*) mucked out the cowshed and pigsty and scattered fresh straw in them. Then they did all kind of outdoor work.



Wilhelmina Luiten [497], milked the cows.

At 10 o'clock it was coffee time.

At noon we had a hot meal. Prayers were always said before eating. We had to eat what was on the table:

farmer's food with potatoes, vegetables and meat and porridge for dessert, all our own products. We ate

everything from the same plate and with one hand, with fork or spoon. After the meal, father read a passage from the Bible. At half past one we listened to the radio to the 'Messages for Agriculture and Horticulture' with the weather forecast. In summer, father and mother took an afternoon nap after a hot meal.



Milking in the pasture.

Photo from the collection of Harry Somsen

Towards the end of the afternoon, father and grandfather fed the cows and pigs for the second time that day. The cows were given tubers in autumn and fodder beet later in winter. The pigs were also fed. They were given a liquid feed made from self-grown pig meal that was mixed with water in the feed trough to form a slurry. Around five o'clock there was a bread meal. Bread with butter and toppings of cheese, apple-strawberry jam or caster sugar. Often also a boiled or fried egg.

In the months of slaughter there was always liverwurst, raw cured ham or beef and sour will. After lunch, father and mother milked the cows for the second time of the day. After milking, the cows were given hay, and the shed was swept. Usually, the working day was over by then.

Then it was time for us to go to bed. First washing, undressing and putting on the pajamas. Then on our knees in front of the bed to say a prayer. At the end of the day, mom and dad ate a plate of porridge. Around ten o'clock the day was over, and they went to bed.

Farm life all year round

Spring

One of the first spring activities was fertilizing and ploughing the fields. The manure from the potting shed was brought to the field by a manure cart pulled by the horse. Then the land was ploughed with a small plough behind the horse. In spring, oats, barley and fodder beets were sown and potatoes were planted. The grain

was sown with a seeder, small fields were sown by father. Potato planting was also done by hand.



Ploughing the fields.

Photo from the collection of Harry Somsen

Father made the holes and we as children were allowed to throw the seed potatoes into the planting holes.

Spring was the time when our cows gave birth to calves. The young piglets were also born. When that happened at night, grandpa and I were allowed to watch over the sow that was going to give birth in the warm barn, and we lay in the straw.



Grandpa Frederik Jan

At the beginning of May, the cows and young cattle went outside into the meadow. That was a happy event. They were happy to regain their freedom after a long winter in the stable. As soon as the cows were outside, the big cleaning of the attics and stables began. After cleaning the walls were whitewashed again.

The living area also received a major cleaning. All the furniture went out of place, the carpets and curtains went out and were beaten out vigorously. Everything was thoroughly cleaned and mopped, and the furniture was scrubbed. When everything was back in place in the evening, it smelled so wonderfully fresh in the house.

May and June were the months of weeding in the fodder beets and potatoes. The fodder beets were also thinned out. Then we all crawled on our knees across the land. It was usually nice, sunny weather and it was a nice job. The weeds among the young potatoes were hoed.

Summer

Summertime was the busiest time of the year. The whole family helped and cooperated with haymaking and rye mowing. It was a period of hard work and long days.

Haymaking time was a wonderful time. Nature is at its best and everything is blooming.



*Mowing rye with horse.
Photo from the collection of Harry Somsen*

I remember the flowery and fragrant grasslands with daisies, cuckoo flowers, and other herbs. The hay grass was mowed with the mower behind the horse, the edges were mowed with the scythe. At the end of the afternoon, the cut grass was raked together and put in small piles with a pitchfork. The next morning, the grass tops were scattered apart again, so that the withered grass could continue to dry in sun and wind. In the evening it was raked together again and put on hay tops. The haytop is also broken up again on the third day.

When the hay was dry, it was raked together at the end of the afternoon into large hay toppers.



Setting up rye, with my father in the middle together with a neighbor and brother-in-law who help.

Then came the hay-wagon. Father lifted the hay and Grandpa picked it up neatly on the wagon. Then the full wagon was brought home, Father removed the loose hay from the wagon and mother and we as children had to put in the attic. It was often very hot in the attic, because the sun shone on the roof tiles all day. Then there was a lot of sweating and dust-biting. Later in the 1960s, we got an electric conveyor-belt, which made the work much easier. It became even easier when hay bales arrived, which were made by a contractor with a baler. At hay time, the wonderful smell of fresh hay filled our entire house.

No crop evokes as many beautiful memories of my childhood as the rye harvest. Rye was by far the most widely grown cereal crop on our sandy soils. The fields of pale-yellow waving cornstalks, blue cornflowers and red poppies were a beautiful sight.

The second half of July was the time of the rye harvest. In normal summers, rye was mowed around St. James (July 25). Harvesting the rye in my youth was done with our hands and horse work. Father and grandfather first mowed from the sides of the rye field with a short scythe. Then the rest of the rye was mowed with the mower, which had been converted into a mowing machine.

From the age of eight I had to drive the horse and father sat on the mower to neatly lay down the mowed grain bundles. Mother tied the loose bundles with some straws to form a sheaf. In later years, the corn was mowed with a self-binder behind a tractor by the contractor and at the end of the sixties the combine harvester (combine) came along and started mowing and threshing with one machine in one pass. At the end of the day or at the beginning of the evening, the sheaves were placed in shoals, which were placed in rows on the stubble land to dry.



*Shoals on a harvesting trolley.
Photo from the collection of Harry Somsen*

After a week, the sheaves were picked up with the harvesting cart. The sheaves were put on the harvesting wagon by father with a fork. Grandpa neatly packed the sheaves down on the wagon. The fully loaded wagon was driven into the barn.

I always found that quite exciting because it required driving in with a fully loaded wagon full of corn, right between the two open barn doors. In the barn the wagon was unloaded, and the sheaves were neatly positioned.

When the rye was off the land, the stubble land was shallowly ploughed and harrowed. Then father sowed the tuberous seed by hand. This had to be done before St. Lawrence (August 10) in order to get sufficient yield.

Autumn

In September it was time for potato harvesting. The harvesting was done both by hand and by a contractor with a potato harvester. Then we all picked up and sorted the harvested potatoes into potato baskets. The potatoes were kept in a soil pit, covered with a layer of straw, leaves and pine needles. In winter, a basket full of potatoes was taken out of the silage every time, both for our family and the pigs. The feed potatoes were cooked in the large pot in the bakehouse for the pigs.



Drawing by Herman Peppelman about threshing in Lintelo. Photo from the collection of Harry Somsen

October was the time for rye sowing and picking pears and apples. In November, the corn was threshed. Then a contractor came with the threshing machine. Threshing was a labor-intensive job in which a number of neighbors always helped. Behind the threshing mill the seed fell into the burlap sacks. The full bags were put in the barn and were later taken to the miller, to be ground into pig feed. The straw was piled up in sheaves in the barn and used as a bedding for the cows and pigs.

In October, the first stubble tubers were picked by hand for animal feed. Later, we had a turnip picking machine behind the horse for this purpose. Usually picking tubers was a cold job that went on until the frost set in. The picked stubble tubers were picked up with a cart and unloaded behind the house in a heap.

November was the month of slaughter, and a pig was slaughtered for our own use.

On the day of slaughter, the slaughterer came to our house in the morning. As soon as the pig was slaughtered, it was hung on a ladder to evaporate and cool down. In the afternoon the butcher came to divide it into pieces, to cut it off. On the day of slaughter, it was very busy for mother and grandmother. All kinds of meat products were made such as pork chop, sausage, liver sausage, sour will, and of course, hams that were dried.



Pig on the ladder.

Photo from the collection of Harry Somsen

Winter

In December, with its short, dark days and long, lovely evenings, farm work in the fields came to an end. One of the last outdoor activities in that month was raking leaves in the meadows and removing forest litter from our forest on the 'Vossenbulte'. This was used as covering material for the fodder beet silages.

In January and February, the firewood and wood for construction were harvested. That was all manual work back then.

Every year, part of the hedgerows around the meadows and along the roads were cut down. Father cut down and pruned the trees with the axe. These were mainly beech, birch and oak. When the trees were cut down and stripped off the branches, father and grandfather chopped the branches with a small hand axe. Then they were tied into bundles of twigs with a thin iron wire around them. The twigs were put to the wood mite. The dry branch wood was used for kindling the stoves. The logs were driven home by

horse and cart and piled up near the fire shed, next to the barn.

In spring, the firewood was sawn into blocks with the circular saw and split. As children, we helped to stack the logs in the woodshed so that they could dry. The heavy poplars and willows along our meadows were also cut down with the axe when they were ready to be cut. Father had a lumberjack do that. After felling, there were all kinds of wood chips, which we picked up with the wheelbarrow to dry for kindling. The logs of the poplars and willows were sold to a clog factory. In spring, new trees were also planted in the form of cuttings, which were taken from straight branches. These were planted in a round hole in the ground for the next generation of poplar or willow. As required, harvest-ready Scots pines and oaks from our own forest and hedgerows were also felled for timber and fence posts.



Farm 'De Snieder' nowadays. Photo Arnold Arentsen

In Memory of Don Allen Somsen [873]
by Deanna Somsen-Adamson [2534]

Don was born on January 31, 1944 to Joseph Don Somsen [2398] and Dorothy Louise Roberts-Somsen [2444] in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He was the second child and first son of the couple. Joseph Don was a grocery man and moved the family often for work. Due to this, Don grew up in Venezuela, California, Illinois and Utah.

He graduated from high school in 1962. While in high school Don worked in grocery stores like his father. Don met Susan Beth Tolley [2543] during this time and after three years of courting they got married on September 25, 1964.

Don left the grocery business and went to work for Hercules. In 1975 he went to work for Chevron (Oil

Company) Refinery in North Salt Lake, where he worked until he retired in 2000.

In that year Don got cancer. Doctors operated on Don so many times that he asked Susan to glue a zipper pull at the top of the incision on his chest. When the nurse came in to check him, she laughed to see the zipper pull; and Don told her the doctor could just unzip this incision instead of operating on it again! His good humor and patience made him a favorite patient in the hospital. I believe his positive attitude helped him survive the cancer.



Susan & Don Allan Somsen-Tolley

Don loved to travel and needed to be busy all the time. This led him to working at a refinery in the Kazakhstan desert, an oil platform off the coast of Nigeria, and finally for Bapco, an oil processing company in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Don and Susan returned home from Bahrain in July, 2021. In between these adventures overseas, Don and Susan spent extended time on the highways in their motorhome wandering throughout the United States. He took his family on many vacations. He took his family to Disneyland, and they loved Mickey Mouse. This brought about a lifetime love for Disney in his children and grandchildren. If you visit Susan, you will see an ample collection of Disney memorabilia collected over the years.

Don passed away at his home on Sunday, October 2, 2022, following a second short but valiant battle with cancer.

Don is survived by his wife Susan, son Darren Allen Somsen [2544] and his wife Katrin Kittel [3935], daughter Jennifer Sue Somsen-Hardrath [2545] and her husband Dustin Hardrath [3664]; grandchildren Sydney Jennifer Hardrath-Bloemke and her husband Ryan Bloemke; and Olivia Grace Hardrath-Butler and her husband Carson Butler.
 He is also survived by his brother Max Somsen [2535] and sisters Sharon Somsen-Vargecko [872] and Deanna Somsen- Adamson [2534].
 He was preceded in death by his parents.

Don attended more than one Somsen Reunion and absolutely loved meeting his Somsen relatives. People will greatly miss him, literally all over the world.

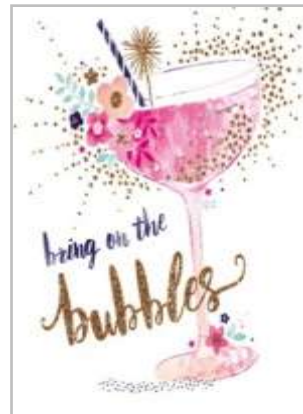


2007 Somsen Reunion. Don Allen [873] and Johan Somsen.[1089]



Willemina van Dijk-Somsen 100 years

by Harry Somsen [146]



Willemina (Mien) van Dijk-Somsen [975] celebrated her 100th birthday on August 18, 2023

She was born in 1923 on the farm "De Olde Kleuver" at Bunninkdijk 8, in the hamlet of De Haart in Aalten.



The Olde Kleuver farm in Aalten

Mien was the sixth child of Roelof Somsen [965] and Willemina Winkelhorst [969].

She married Gerrit Hendrik Stronks [1008] † 1977 in 1953 in Aalten. They had four children, 1 daughter and 3 sons. She married Sjouke van Dijk [1031] in Winterswijk † 2000.



Family Announcements

In this section our genealogy advisor Dirk Somsen [136] from Halsteren informs you about the family announcements. We thank everyone who has informed us again about happy or sad events in the family. This helps to keep the genealogical database 'up to date' and to report about them in the *Horizon* or Newsletter. We appreciate being able to share this with our relatives. Kindly remember us with any events happening in your family. We appreciate if you could send your family announcements (preferably with a photo) to somsgenealogie@kpnplanet.nl or D. Somsen Verduinsbos 10 4661NW Halsteren NL

Born:

31-07-2019: Eldon Frank Lavery [8028], Lehi [ut,usa]
29-04-2020: Silas Finlay Allred [8031], Nephi [ut,usa]
01-08-2021: Arlo Janes Lavery [8029], Riverton [ut,usa]
19-08-2022: Maylee Grace Lavery [8030], Riverton [ut,usa]
24-08-2023: Sam Jan (Sam) Randeraat [8014], Hilversum



Sam Randeraat [8014]

Marriet: no entries

Deceased:

01-08-2021: Arlo Janes Lavery [8029], 0, Riverton [ut,usa]
16-06-2022: Patrick Paul Vargecko [2539], 78, Mesa [az, usa]
02-10-2022: Don Allen Somsen [873], 78, Taylorsville [ut,usa]
09-02-2023: Anneke Goverdina Wilhelmina (Anneke) van Drimmelen [93], 76 , Nunspeet
26-3-2023: Roelof (Roel) Stronks [2095], 67, Winterswijk
20-5-2023: Arent Jan (Jan) Somsen [501], 87, Aalten



Anneke van Drimmelen [93]



Don Allen Somsen [873]



Vincent van Gogh - Sterrennacht

Het bestuur van de Somsen Stichting
wensst u èn uw familieleden
een vrolijk, gezegend, zalig Kerstfeest
&
een Gelukkig èn Gezond 2024 !