The Origins of Names and
Their Effect on Genealogical Research in

The Netherlands
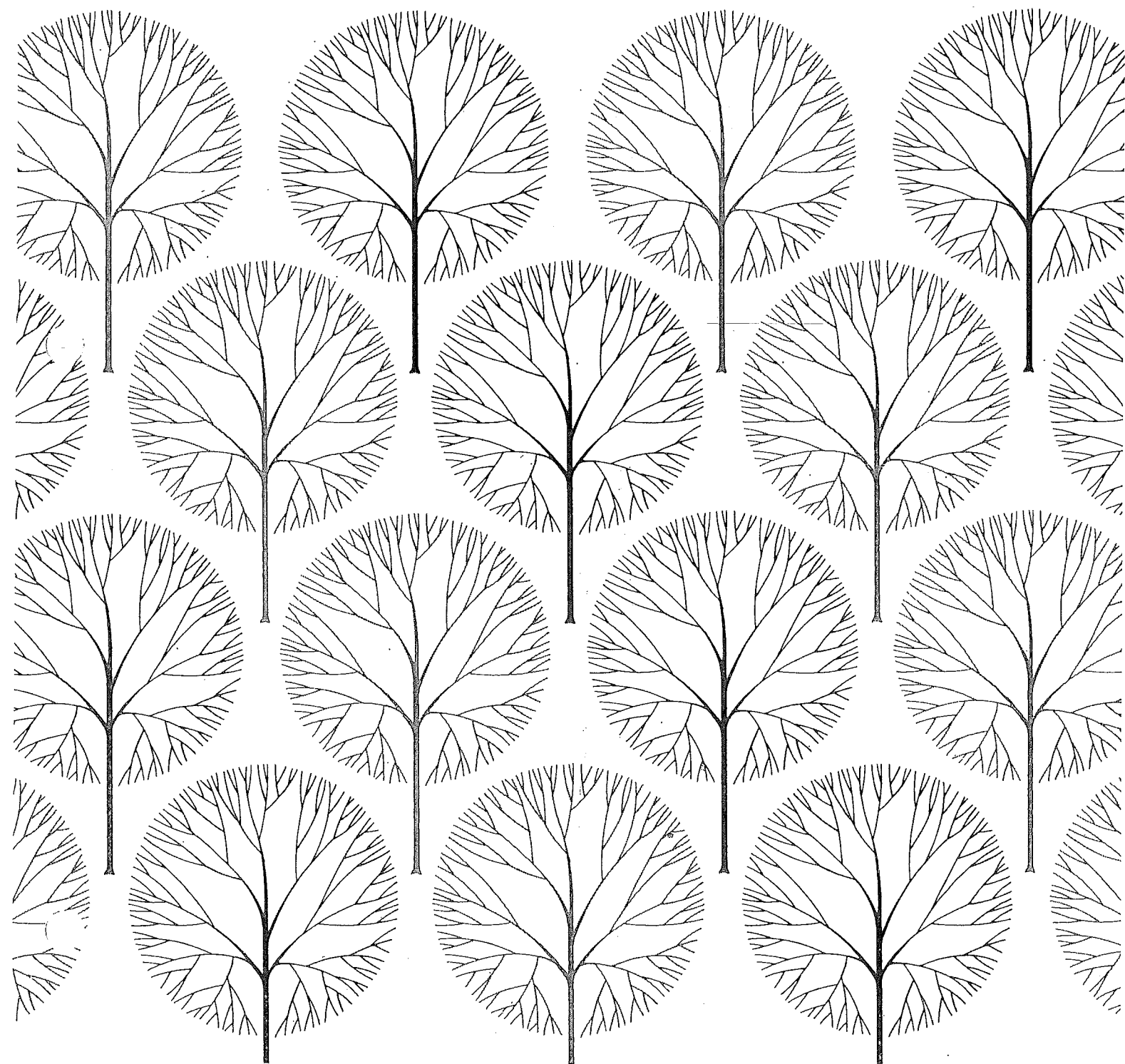
Introduction

Choosing names for children has always been a private, personal matter to parents. The customs of the area of residence or the place of origin, however, have had a significant influence in the selection of those names.

In earlier times, a single given name was adequate identification, but as the population increased and more people were given the same names, a single name proved inadequate as a means of identification. To meet the need, bynames and aliases were added for clarification. These names were added not only by the persons themselves and their immediate families, but quite often by their neighbors and associates. During this period, surnames were uncertain, and the same person might be known to different groups by different names. Eventually, however, many of these extra names became fixed surnames. The most persistent practice of providing an extra (or sur) name for identification was to adopt a patronymic (or father's name). Over a long period of time, most of the population followed this practice of identifying themselves with their fathers' given names, and some continued the practice until fixed surnames were required.

This paper deals with some aspects of the development of given names, of patronymics, and especially of surnames in the Netherlands.

The Development of Given Names

An understanding of the background of given names is basic to understanding the development of patronymics and surnames.

Given names in the area comprising the Netherlands were mainly influenced and derived from (a) Germanic non-Christian names, and (b) Christian-Germanic saint names, later also including Old Testament and classical names.

At first there were many simple names in use, such as Athal, Brecht, Dodo, Edo, Gero. These names and others like them were found by the hundreds among the various Germanic tribes and nations. These singular or primitive parent names were adequate at first, but, as the population grew, their limited number was a source of confusion; there were too many people for too few names. A partial solution was found by combining two names into a single new name. Gero and Hart formed the name Gerhart, which formed the basis for Gerald, Gerrit, and Geert in later times. Athal and Win were combined into Athalwin (Alewijn). Thiudo (Tiede) and Rik were formed into Thiudorik, which developed into Theodoric, Diederick, and Dirck.

There were no special rules for combining names, but for centuries the names combined were derived from those of relatives and in-laws.[1] It should also be noted that most of these combination-names had a melodious sound.

The names of Gang and Olf (or Wolf) were combined to form either Gangolf or Wolfgang; Hart and Gero made either Gerhart or Hartger. Thus thousands of names were added. Many of these combinations and the background of the combination-names can be found in volume one of Förstemann's *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*.[2]

Another type of old German name also utilized double names. The first part was called the headstem and the second part the by-stem. There were fewer by-stems than head-stems and they (the by-stems) were used to distinguish between male and female names. The male by-stems included:

bald	grim	mund
bercht	hard	nanth
bod	hari	nod
bord	hath	rad
brand	helm	ric
dag	hraban	rid
frith	hroc	scalc
funs	hrod	stain
gang	laic	thanc
gar	laif	thiu
gard	land	wald
gast	man	ward
gis	mar	wig
gisil	mod	whif

[1] J. P. J. Gewin, "Vaste Regels Bij Naamgeving in de Vroege Middeleeuwen" (Fixed Rules of Name-giving in the Middle Ages), in *Genealogie en Naamgeving in de Middeleeuwen* (Genealogy and Name-giving in the Middle Ages) ed. by J. M. van Winter and J. P. J. Gewin (Leuven: Instituut voor Naamkunde, 1961).
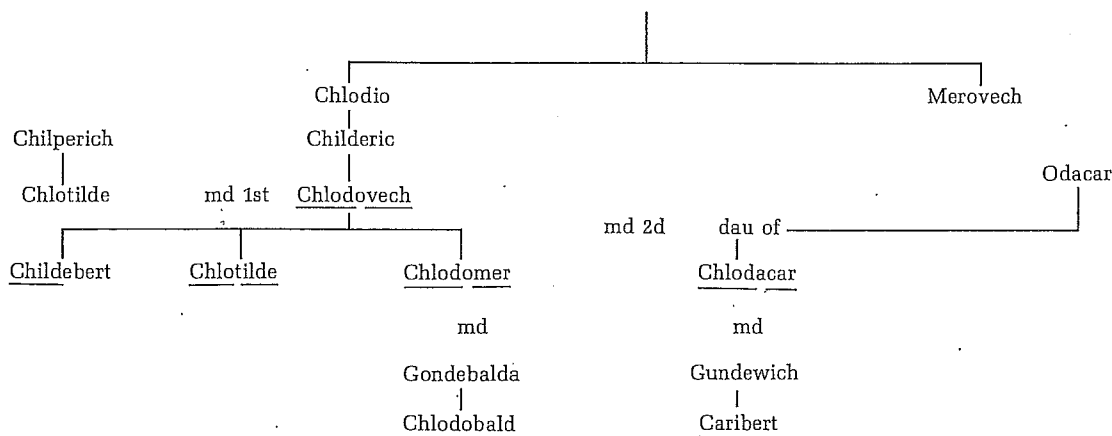
[2] Ernst Wilhelm Förstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch* (2 vols.), (Munick: Wilhelm Fink, 1966-68).

The female by-stems included:

balda	haid and heidi
berga	hilda
berta	hildis
burga	lind
drudis and trudis	lindis
fledis	sind and sinda
garda and gardis	swind
gildus	windis
gunda and gundis	wis

With the head-stem Athal, male names such as Athalbald, Athalbercht, and Atholbod could be composed. The female form of the same name is Adel, and by adding by-stems various female names are created, such as Adelbalda, Adelberga, Adelhildis.

After the ninth century, the Christian influence is noticed in the names which were used. The head-stem was the Germanic saint name; to this a by-stem was added. The practice continued for some centuries until it fell into disuse as children were given unchanged names derived from the fixed head-stems and by-stems of the two nearest generations of relatives. An example of this latter practice follows:


The example is one of a family related to Charlemagne and dates from the ninth and tenth centuries. It shows how children were given names derived from either the fixed head-stem, the fixed by-stem, or both of the two or more nearest generations or relatives. The underlined portions indicate those parts of the names which came from relatives. The eldest son was nearly always named for his grandfather.

This system continued until the sixteenth century when it was altered by the addition of classical and biblical given names, perhaps due to the influence of the Renaissance and the Reformation.[3]

The foregoing can be summarized in graphic form as follows:
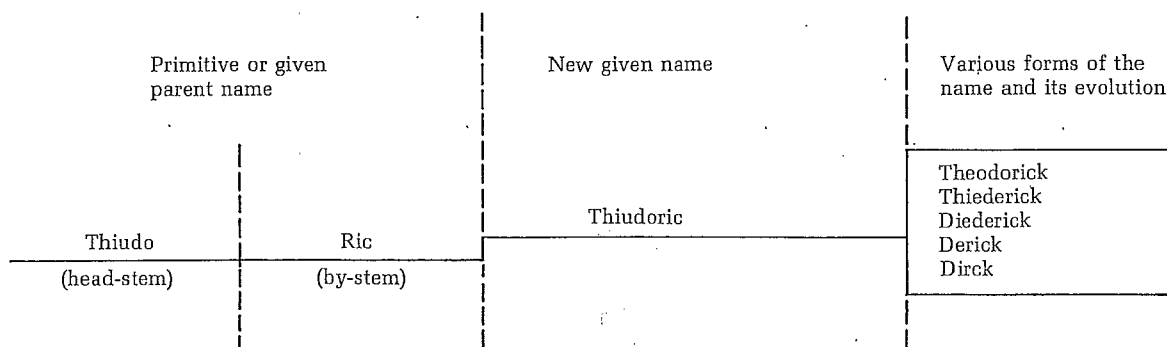
[3] See J. J. Graaf, *Nederlandsche Doopnamen Naar Oorsprong en Gebruik* (Netherlands Baptismal Names According to Origin and Use) (Bussum: Paul Brand, 1915).

As time passed and the practice of naming children for saints, biblical personages, grandparents, and other relatives became common, the meanings of names became only secondary. At this juncture it is important for the genealogist to understand two customs which developed and were widely followed until the beginning of the twentieth century:

1. Children were usually named for close relatives. The first two sons were named for their grandfathers and the first two daughters for their grandmothers. Younger children usually were given the names of brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles of the parents. The son born after his father's death was given the father's name; and if the wife died and the husband remarried, the first daughter of that new marriage was given the name of the deceased wife. An understanding of this arrangement is vital in determining the given name of the child's grandparents. In some areas of the country the practice was not strictly followed. In some places the customs were even more specific. For example, in the provinces of Friesland and Groningen, and in the adjoining province of Oostfriesland in West Germany, the custom prevailed in certain families to name their children as follows:

> The first son was named for his paternal grandfather.
> The second son was named for his maternal grandfather.
> The third son was named for his father's paternal grandfather.
> The fourth son was named for his mother's paternal grandfather.
> The fifth son was named for his father's maternal grandfather.
> The sixth son was named for his mother's maternal grandfather.

The same rule was followed for daughters in the family, except they were named for grandmothers, the mother's side of the family receiving first priority:

> The first daughter was named for her maternal grandmother.
> The second daughter was named for her paternal grandmother.
> The third daughter was named for her mother's maternal grandmother.
> The fourth daughter was named for her father's maternal grandmother.
> The fifth daughter was named for her mother's paternal grandmother.
> The sixth daughter was named for her father's maternal grandmother.[4]

Remember this was strictly a local custom, but it is a very important one for the genealogist to consider.

There are many local customs that might be discussed, but space limitations allow only a few brief examples. In the province of Drenthe it was not uncommon for the eldest son to be given the full name of his grandfather, both given name and patronymic (or surname). In one example the father was named Jan Bolding Beenen, the grandfather was named Beene Engberts, and the firstborn son was also given the name Beene Engberts. Later sons, who were named for their great-grandfathers, were also given the full names of those great-grandfathers. Sometimes the patronymic is used and sometimes not.

In Drenthe, when a son was born to a man posthumously, the son was given the father's name. However, if there was no posthumous birth and the widow remarried, the full name of the deceased husband was given to the first son of that subsequent marriage. Finding two persons with the same names in the records, with no apparent relationship between them, is sometimes quite confusing.

During the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, children in Drenthe—both boys and girls—were frequently named for relatives from whom an inheritance was expected.[5]

2. Diminutive forms of given names often appear. They are of two types:

a. Abbreviated or shortened names:

> Thijs instead of Matthijs
> Dries or Drees instead of Andries
> Cobus or Coop instead of Jacob (us)
> Mees or Bart instead of Bartholomeus
> Trijntje or Cattje instead of Catharina
> Lena or Leentje instead of Magdalena or Helena
> Lijsbet or Betje instead of Elisabeth
> Grietje or Margje instead of Margrieta

b. Endearing terms for females:

> Marieken, Maritje, Maertgen, Maaijcken instead of Maria
> Betje, Elsien, Lijsje, Lijsbetje, Lijbe instead of Elisabeth

The feminine version of a male name is formed by the addition of je(n), tje(n), pje(n), ke(n), and tge(n). The older forms were ghe(n), tghe(n), tije(n), tie(n), and tke(n). Thus the feminine form of Dirk is Dirkje, the feminine form of Willem is Willempjen, and the feminine form of Adriaen is Adriaentgen.[6]

Today the traditions of the past, so far as naming is concerned, are largely ignored. It is customary now to name children for public figures or merely to give

[4] See also W. J. Hartman van Nortmoor, "Afstammingsonderzoek in Oostfriesland" (Descent Exploration in East Friesland), *Gens Nostra* 13: 171-174 (1958).

[5] For more information on naming patterns in Drenthe see G. L. Meesters, "Genealogisch Onderzoek in Drenthe" (Genealogical Investigation in Drenthe), *Hoe Vindt Men Zijn Voorouders in de Nederlandse Archieven?* (How Does One Find His Progenitors in the Netherlands Archives?) (Amsterdam: Nederlandse Genealogische Vereniging, 1961), pp. 110-15.

[6] See J. Vander Schaar, *Woordenboek van Voornamen* (Dictionary of Given Names) 5th ed. (Antwerpen: Uitgeverij het Spectrum, N.V., 1970).

them names which appeal to the parents.[7]

In the first half of the twentieth century the twelve most common male names, in order of their popularity, were:

Jan	derived from Johannes
Piet	derived from Pieter, Petrus
Peter	derived from Pieter, Petrus
Henk	derived from Hendrik
Hans	derived from Johannes
Kees	derived from Cornelis
Wim	derived from Willem
Cor	derived from Corstiaan, Cornelis
Gerard	derived from Gerardus
Gerrit	derived from Gerardus
Johan	derived from Johannes
Rudi	derived from Rudolf

During the same period the twelve most common females' names were:

Annie	derived from Anna
Bep	derived from Barbara, Berta
Marie(tje)	derived from Maria
Mien	derived from Wilhelmina
Willie	derived from Wilhelmina
Alie	derived from Alida
Corrie	derived from Cornelia
Lenie	derived from Lena, Helena
Grietje	derived from Margrieta
Tinie	derived from Christina, Catharina
Jopie	derived from Josephina
Ansje	derived from Anna

The Development of Patronymics

We have indicated that in the distant past people had only given names. As time passed this became impractical and bothersome. To better distinguish between persons with the same given names, various other means of identification were added. These additions—bynames, nicknames, or aliases—were based on occupations and trades, areas of residence, surroundings, personal peculiarities, complexion, and other things. But the most common and persistent means of identification was the addition of the father's (or mother's) given name. This was called a patronymic (father's name) or matronymic (mother's name). The terms are translated from the Greek words *patronimika* and *matronimika*. Under this system Wilfried, the son of Lutgar, became Wilfried Lutgarson; Ysbrand, the son of Lambercht, became Ysbrand Lamberchtson; and Cornelia, the daughter of Hendrik, became Cornelia Hendriksdaughter. The Dutch word for son is *zoon* (in Old Dutch, *soen, zoen, soon*) and it is abbreviated to *sz, z, se, sen,* and *x*. Daughter in Dutch is *dochter* (in Old Dutch, *dog-(h)ter*) and is abbreviated to *d, dr, s, se, sen, sens,* and

x. All of these are common Dutch patronymic endings.

In the northern and eastern part of the country, comprising approximately the provinces of Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe, Overijssel, and Gelderland, different (additional) patronymic forms were used in very early periods. Though they had fallen almost entirely into disuse by the time church registers began, they nevertheless comprised an important part of the surnames which were later adopted, and they should be discussed briefly.

In Friesland the endings *sa, ga, inga, ma,* and *sma* were added to the father's name. The ending *stra* is also common in Friesland, but it is not patronymic. It comes from *sater* or *sitter* which means resident, occupant, or tenant. Thus, a resident of the farmstead Gaa was often identified by the name Gaastra.

In Groningen the endings were primarily either the same as those in Friesland or were of Saxon origin.[8] The patronymic suffixes *ema, uma, enga, inga, sema, ena,* and *ing* were common.

In Drenthe the endings *ing (h), in(c)k,* and *nge* are numerous, but most of these do not signify descent or relationship. They follow, rather, as endings for geographical, farm, and occupational names. The *ies* and *iens* endings in Drenthe are patronymic. In Overijssel and Gelderland the *ing(h)* and *in(c)k* endings reflect the same situation as in Drenthe. The patronymic changed with each generation and has genealogical value because it indicates both the

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[7] *Ibid.*, preface.

[8] Since the fifth century, the Frisians inhabited the coastal areas of what is now the Netherlands. In some areas they mixed with the Frankish people in the southern parts of the country and the Saxon people who inhabited the eastern areas. In Groningen the population was mostly Frisian in the coastal area and mostly Saxon in the interior.

relationship and the father's name. The father of Jan Pietersz would thus be named Pieter.

The principle behind matronymics is the same, but in the Netherlands the matronymic was never used as extensively as the patronymic. Thus it does not occur with each new generation. Where used, however, it does indicate the relationship and the mother's name. Claes Grietensoen's mother would be named Griet under this system. Sometimes *kint* was added to the patronymic form of the mother's name, as with John Lijsenkint, which signifies that Johan is the child of Lijse(n). In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when patronymics did not follow a rigid pattern, patronymics (as well as metronymics) were sometimes written in the possessive case instead of in their abbreviated forms. Typical of these possessive patronymics are Heijne Pieternellen, Jacob Luijtjen, and Lutger Geesen.

There are other forms and patterns of patronymics:

1. The alternating patronymic, which occurred through the first-born sons:

<div style="text-align:center">

Oomke Luijtjens

↓

Luijtjen Oomkes

↓

Oomke Luitjens

↓

Luitjen Oomkes

</div>

2. Maternal patronymics, where the son took or was given his mother's patronymic. This occurred in the northern and eastern provinces:

<div style="text-align:center">

Hindrick Roelofs md Elske *Willems*

↓

Roelof *Willems*

</div>

3. Remote patronymics,[9] where the child was named for a more distant relative who must be ascertained by further research:

<div style="text-align:center">

Beerend Waldrix md Tiade Tjerks

↓

Sijben Jans

</div>

4. The patronymic with the recurring surname, where the family had a surname, but was so well known that the members were called by their patronymics rather than by the surname. Even ministers and caretakers of the church failed to record the few surnames, except sporadically:

<div style="text-align:center">

Tjerk Heerkes

↓

Heerke Tjercks Pot

↓

Tjerck Heerkes

↓

Jan Tjerks

↓

Hindrik Jans Pot

</div>

5. Double or multiple patronymics, where (mostly prior to the seventeenth century) the person's given name was followed by his father's given name and his grandfather's given name. You might see:
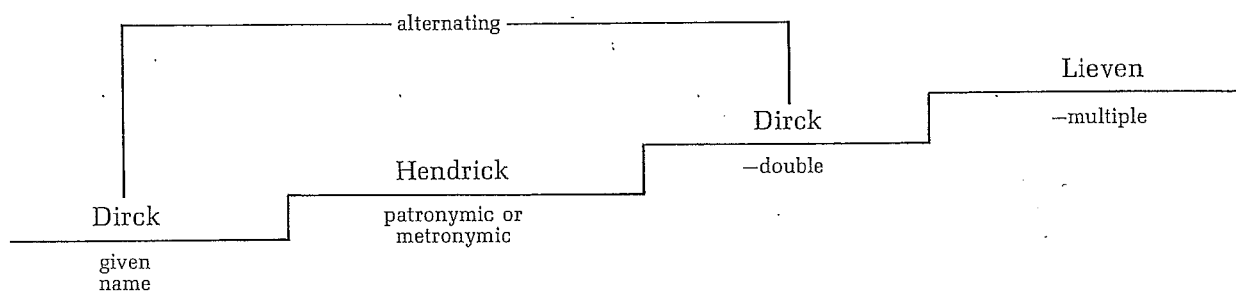
Jan Aem Janszz or Jan Aem Janssonson

Others might be:

Luijt Willem Claisszoen
Grijet Daems Heijnricxdr
Claere Jan Heijndricxdr

[9] See Meesters, note 5.

Multiple patronymics were more common in the southern provinces, especially Noord Brabant. They also date mostly prior to the seventeenth century. They are like double patronymics except they list several generations of fathers' given names. Searches have revealed that they sometimes contain errors, such as one name in the chain being omitted or names being written in improper sequence. Names such as Willem Willem Jan Heindrik Lambrechtssz, and some even much longer, are found.

To summarize in graphic form:

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                    ---------- alternating ------------------¬
  ┌──────────────────────────                               │                    Lieven
  │                                                          │         ┌─────────────────────────
  │                                               Dirck      │         │   —multiple
  │                                      ┌──────────         └─────────┘
  │                      Hendrick        │   —double
  │          ┌──────────                 └──────────
  Dirck      │          patronymic or
  ──────────┘           metronymic
   given
   name
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Dirck Hendricks (single patronymic)
Dirck Hendrick Dirckssz (double patronymics)
Dirck Hendrick Dirck Lievenssz (multiple patronymics)

The Development of Surnames Prior to 1811

By decree of the Emperor Napoleon in 1811, all Netherlands families were required to have fixed surnames, but many Dutch surnames developed much earlier, even as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When a family adopted a surname depended on the area of residence, social status, and other factors. The general pattern of surname development in the Netherlands was from south to north.

The origins of Dutch surnames can be divided into four main categories. They are:

1. Patronymics or metronymics.
2. Geographical origins, such as house, farm or estate names, and names derived from the name signs of inns, businesses, etc.
3. Occupations and trades.
4. Names derived from aliases and nicknames, which were based on physical and spiritual attributes.

The nobility were the first to adopt family names from the names of the estates where they originally resided. Various branches of the family, however, chose the names of their separate estates, and even more surnames were added by illegitimate sons adopting surnames in the same manner.
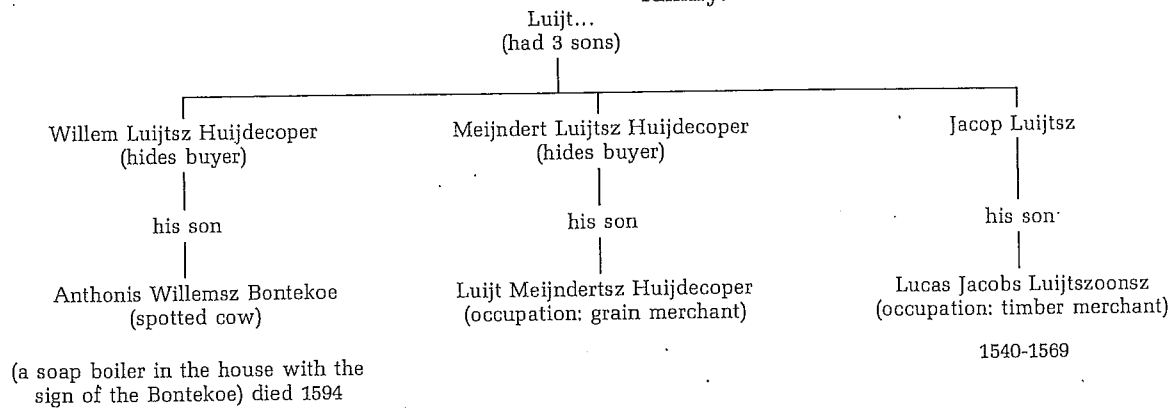
After the towns received their charters, as many did during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the lower nobility and landed gentry began to establish themselves therein. Some took up trades, while others were active in local government. They mingled socially with the tradesmen and merchant people and often intermarried. Children of these marriages adopted the surnames of their noble parents. Many of these surnames contain prefixes such as *van, tho,* and *ter,* which are translated as *from* and *at.* The terms were actually possessive, however, and indicate "a lessee, tenant or owner of"– followed by the name of the estate, mansion, or castle. For example: Van Assendelft, Van Foreest, Van Spaernewoude.

In subsequent centuries, the names of more estates (or other surnames) were added, and double surnames were devised. After purchasing the manor of Papendrecht, Cornelis Hoijnck named himself Cornelis Hoijnck van Papendrecht, which name was carried by his descendants. Many combinations were possible,[10] some with three or more surnames.

The trades people were known mainly by patronymics, except in those cases, as cited earlier, where they intermarried with nobility. However, to achieve better identification, the names of their trades were often added to the patronymic:

Heijnrick Jansz die Goutsmit (the goldsmith)
Clais Willemsz die Brouwer (the brewer)
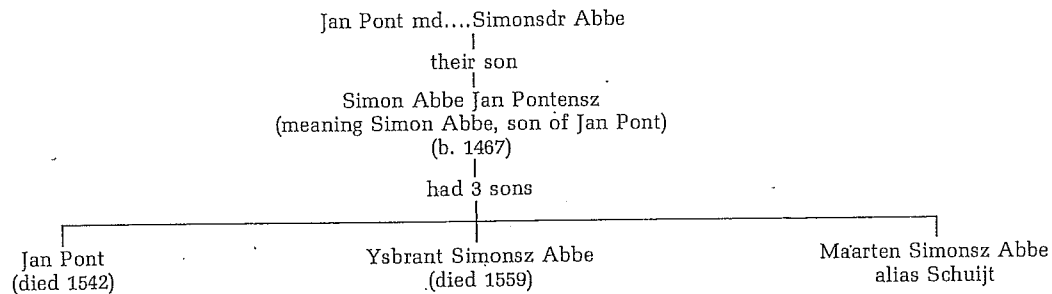Berthelmees Florijs die Snijder (the tailor)

These, like many aliases, were seldom carried on to the next generation, though the son of Willem Jansz, the carpenter, might be referred to as Jan Willems Timmermans (Jan Willems, the carpenter's son). In other instances a son might follow the trade of his father and retain the name which his father added. This could result in a fixed surname. A good example of some of the possibilities is illustrated by the following sixteenth century Amsterdam family:[11]

Luijt...
(had 3 sons)

Willem Luijtsz Huijdecoper (hides buyer)	Meijndert Luijtsz Huijdecoper (hides buyer)	Jacop Luijtsz
his son	his son	his son
Anthonis Willemsz Bontekoe (spotted cow)	Luijt Meijndertsz Huijdecoper (occupation: grain merchant)	Lucas Jacobs Luijtszoonsz (occupation: timber merchant)
(a soap boiler in the house with the sign of the Bontekoe) died 1594		1540-1569

In this family we find two brothers taking their surnames from their trade and a third brother retaining the patronymic form. A son of one of those brothers derived his surname from a house sign and dropped his father's surname. The son of the second brother retained his father's surname even though his occupation changed. And the son of the brother who had retained the patronymic form adopted his father's full name.

A portion of the pedigree of another Amsterdam family illustrates a variety of patronymics, double patronymics, maternal surname adoption, and use of an alias:

Jan Pont md....Simonsdr Abbe
their son
Simon Abbe Jan Pontensz
(meaning Simon Abbe, son of Jan Pont)
(b. 1467)
had 3 sons

Jan Pont (died 1542)	Ysbrant Simonsz Abbe (died 1559)	Maarten Simonsz Abbe alias Schuijt

Many examples could be given of families in other localities, but it is sufficient to say that patterns of giving and adopting surnames were bound by no particular rules.[12]

Persons residing in the rural areas were usually slower to take a family name than those who lived in urban areas, but this varies from one locality to another. Families in the north and the east were generally slow to adopt fixed surnames, but primarily used patronymics. Also, Jewish families of German and Slavic origin (the *Ashkenasim*) generally adopted no surnames until 1811 when the emperor required it.

Most families in Overijssel, as well as those in northeast Gelderland, took surnames derived from the farmsteads on which they lived, and changed these as they moved from on to another. Sometimes they would go back to their patronymic, then to the

[10] See H. W. M. J. Kits Nieuwekamp, *Encyclopedie van de Heraldiek* (Encyclopedia of Heraldry), (Elsevier, 1961), pp. 7-8.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] See note 13.

name of a new residence, and then again to the name of the earlier residence. Such inconsistencies can be a genealogical nightmare. An example of this erratic type of pattern follows:

Jan Willem *Braamkolk,* of Diepenveen, Overijssel, married 8 May 1774 in Gorsel, Gelderland, to Berendina Roelofs *Asinkhutte,* of Epse, daughter of Roelof Mol.

At the christenings of their children, the names of the parents were listed as follows:

1775 at Deventer   Jan Willem *Braamkolk* & Berendina Roelofs *Huttert.*

1781 at Deventer   Jan Willem *Hekkert* & Berendina Roelofs Mol.

The husband remarried as Jan Willem *Oldepessink,* 25 Mar 1784 in Holten, to Lutgerdina Harmsen Custers. He and the second wife were listed as follows at the christenings of their children:

1786 at Epse   Jan Willem *Oldepessink* & Lutgerdina Harmsen

1791 at Deventer   Jan Willem *Oldepessink* & Lutgerdina Harmsen

1793 at Epse   Jan Willem *Huttert* & Lutgerdina Coster

1796 at Gorsel   Jan Willem *Braamkolk* & Lutgerdina Harmsen Custers

All sons adopted the surname Braamkolk.

The recognizable elements in the above family are the patronymics of the wives and the given names. These remained unchanged throughout most of the recording and formed the basis of the search. The names Assinkhutte, Braamkolk, Huttert, Hekkert, and Oldepessink are farmstead names. The names Mol and Costers (Custers) are surnames.

In Zelhem, Gelderland, a problem arose at the marriage of Berend Berendsen and Berendina Klein Luikink concerning the bride's name. In regard to that problem, the bride's mother filed a declaration that the family of her late husband, Jan Klein Luikink, was really Wassink, and that he was the son of Jan Wassink. In order to distinguish himself from others, he wrote his name as Wassink op (on) Klein Luijkink or Klein Luikink, the farmstead on which he then resided. This last name, she said, was mistakenly carried as his family name.

In Midwolde, Groningen, the surname Ploeg was twice traced through the female line to a common ancestor, as the following example illustrates:
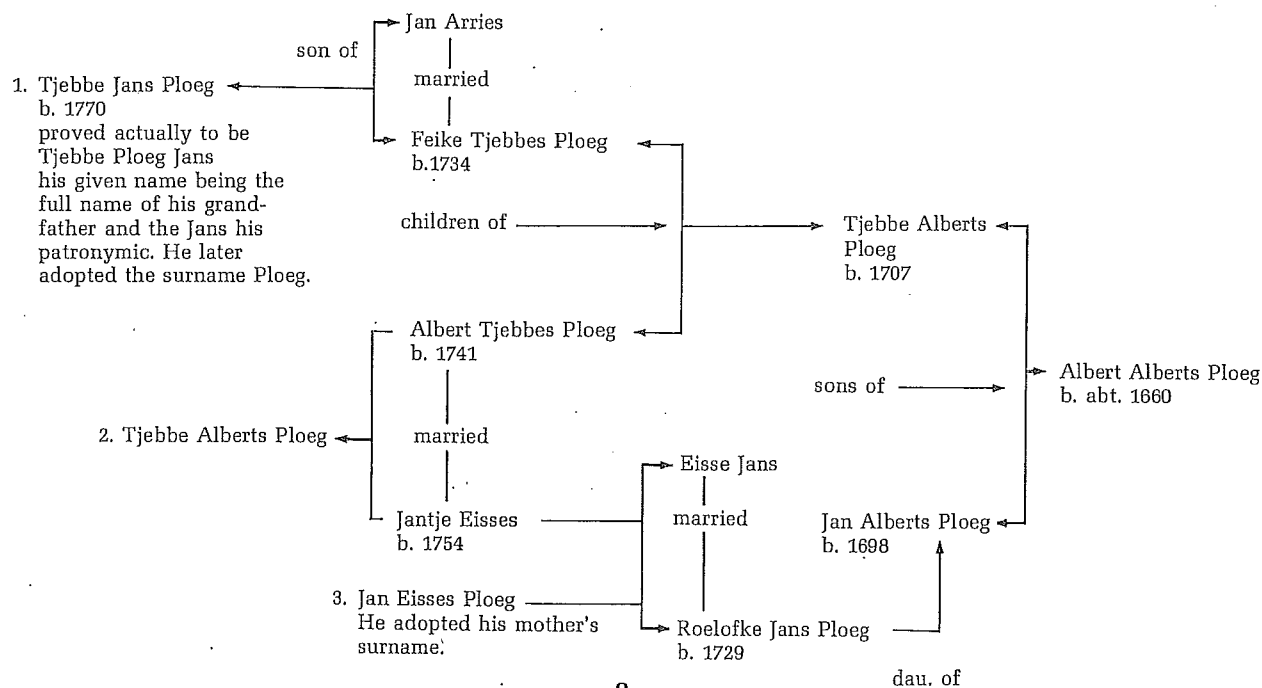
The bibliography lists several publications containing more detailed information on how different surnames were derived.[13]

The Spelling of
Names and Its Effect

The Dutch language has undergone a slow and steady change through the ages. Some words have become outmoded, and the original meanings of various other words and expressions have become obscure. Spellings have also evolved, and many spellings, especially of unfamiliar names, have undergone great change. However, spelling problems are due to more than mere change. In early periods there were no standard spellings. Unfamiliar names were recorded phonetically by the scribes, and dialects played an important role. Foreign names sometimes underwent drastic changes, many being unrecognizably corrupted and impossible to trace. Some foreign surnames were translated literally into Dutch with the consequent loss of the original spelling.

The surnames most seriously affected by this process were those of the French. Many examples can be found in the records of the larger towns of the provinces of Holland (Noord and Zuid Holland) and Zeeland where most of the Huguenots and Walloons settled. Examples of corrupted French names include:

Bailli	became	Balje
Bouteiller	became	Batteljee
Bocque	became	Boekee
Butin	became	Buteijn
Caillou	became	Caljouw
Cheval	became	Cevaal
Godailler	became	Goedeljee
du Jardin	became	Dusarduijn
Lutin	became	Luteijn

Examples of translated names include:

de Bruyere to van Heijde or van der Heijde (of the heather)	
Cheval to Paard	(horse)
Chevalier to Ridder	(horseman, knight)
L'enfant to Verkind(eren)	(the child[ren])
D'espagne to van Spanjen	(a geographical place name in France which has nothing to do with Spain as translated)
Le Grand to de Groot	(the great)
Guillaume to Willems	(Williams)
Le Roi (LeRoy) to de Coninck or Koning	(the king)

These are but a small sample of the French names in the records of the Netherlands, but they should serve as a warning to those who search the records for French families. A useful tool in solving the problem of translated and corrupted names is the now rare book by J. J. Salverda, *De Fransche Woorden in het Nederlandsch*.[14] The Walloon Church Archives Collection[15] may also give indications as to variations in spelling of particular surnames, as the surnames are arranged phonetically.

The converse problem, the translation of Dutch names wholly or partially into Latin or Greek, should also be considered. The practice existed mostly in writing, but sometimes also in actual use. It was a practice followed mainly by ministers of various Protestant churches and by a number of intellectuals. For example:

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[13] An informative article on the various deviations in naming children and the adopting of surnames in the northern part of the province of Noord Holland is G. L. Meesters, R. F. Vulsma and P. L. H. Crasborn, *Onze Voorouders en Hun Werk* (Our Ancestors and Their Work) (Amsterdam: Nederlandse Genealogische Vereniging, 1971), pp. 37-57.

[14] J. J. Salverda, *De Fransche Woorden in het Nederlandsch* (French Words in Dutch) (Amsterdam, 1906).

[15] This collection is on film at the Genealogical Society. It is discussed in some detail, and information is given on its use, in a Research Paper in this series entitled "Church Records in the Netherlands—Walloon or French Reformed," (Series C, No. 23, Stock No. PRGS0998).

Jan de Backer		became Johannes	Pistorius
And surnames	Smith	became	Fabritius
	vander Broek	became	Paludanus

The above forms are not as common as are Dutch names with Latin or Greek endings. Most of these were patronymics. For example:

Latin endings		Latin patronymic endings		Greek patronymic endings	
de Groot	Grotius	Hayes	Hajenius	Hermans	Hermanides
Voet	Voetius	Hilles	Hillenius	Paulus	Paulides
de Hond	Hondius	Eisses	Eyssonius	Simons	Simonides

Within the first decade after the beginning of civil registration of vital statistics in 1811, the spellings of names were standardized; and records since that time do not pose this problem.

Mandatory Adoption of Surnames

No civil government of the Netherlands ever passed legislation requiring people to choose names and surnames until the Netherlands became part of the French Empire in 1811. On August 18 of that year Napoleon the Great issued Imperial Decree No. 7178, based on a French law of 20 July 1808, concerning "the fixation and adoption of given names and surnames." The decree provided that:

(1) Those of our subjects of the Departments of the former Holland..., who until now have not had fixed surnames and given names, must adopt them during the year[16]...and declare them before the officers of the civil registry of the communities in which they reside....

(5) Those...who have known surnames...will be excepted. They who wish to conserve their names will nevertheless be required to declare them.

(6) The surname which the father, or in his absence the paternal grandfather, has chosen or conserved will be given to all children, who will be required to go by it and use it in documents. Thus the father, or in his absence the grandfather, will include the living children and grandchildren and their places of residence; and those...who have their father, or lacking him their grandfather, still living, will limit themselves to declaring that he exists and stating the place of his residence.

Those who refused to comply with the edict were threatened with fines and other punishments. Mothers, grandmothers, and guardians were not mentioned in the decree, but they could also declare and register names. The decree contained a few limitations and restrictions. For example, place names could not be adopted as surnames by those who had not previously used them.

As a result of these decrees, special registers were created for recording the newly-adopted names. In Dutch they were called naamsaanneming (pronounced naw-saw-naming) registers. There was some resistance to this French decree, and apparently many did not comply. Others thought it was "just one of those French laws" that would be dropped or forgotten after the occupation, and they chose frivolous names (which their descendants must retain). It was because of this attitude of resistance and noncompliance that extensions of the registra-

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[16] The time allowed for choosing and registering a surname was extended by subsequent decrees.

tion period were made.

The registers were to be compiled in duplicate,[17] one for each municipality. In using them, however, remember that present municipal boundaries may differ from the boundaries of that period. For example, Rinsumageest, then a municipality containing the communities of Birdaard, Janum, Rinsumageest, and Sibrandahuis, is now part of the municipality of Dantumadeel. Watch for similar situations in other areas.[18]

The arrangement of these *naamsaanneming* registers varies greatly. Most of them contain more than one community, and they are seldom indexed. The information in the entries varies, but most entries give at least the name and age of each living child and grandchild of the registrant. In addition, some registrars listed complete birth dates and birth places. Many recorded the person's current place of residence. The wife is not included in her husband's registration, but she may be listed in her father's or her grandfather's entry, if the father or grandfather was living at that time. In some later entries, women were registered by themselves. Also, widows often registered with their children and/or grandchildren when the surname for those children and grandchildren was chosen. The age of the registrant is not given in the record, only the ages of his children and grandchildren. Names of deceased husbands or, in the case of orphans, deceased fathers are usually listed; also the names of the stepfathers and guardians are listed. Only children and grandchildren who were living at the time of the entry are included.

The registers reveal how some families that spread into various communities adopted the same surname, sometimes with variations in the spelling; and how, in other families, brothers chose entirely different surnames. Through these registers it is also possible to discover collateral branches of well-established families which were overlooked in the search of church registers because no apparent relationship could be ascertained.

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[17] There is little evidence that duplicate copies were made, and in some areas there is even doubt that any registers were prepared. Some registers have been discovered as recently as the 1940s, which suggests they were sometimes kept in the registrar's home and remained with his private papers after his death.

[18] Municipal boundary changes in the province of Overijssel between 1807 (1811) and 1842 are described in F. M. Hendriks, *De Grenzen van Overijssel en van de Overijsselse Gemeenten van 1807 (1811)-1842* (Druk: Jan de Lange, N.V., 1960).

[19] The term *accepts* is found throughout the registers. This means the registrant accepts the name which the other descendants and relatives have chosen. The name was certainly not suggested by the registrar.

[20] This person is also listed in a separate entry with his child Pieterke on 8 Jan 1812.

There are seven types of entries which are ordinarily found:

1. The male head of household for his children and/or grandchildren.

2. The male for himself.

3. The female for herself.

4. The widow for her children and/or grandchildren.

5. The widow for her children by more than one husband, in which case two surnames are usually listed.

6. The stepfather for the children of his wife's deceased husband. They are usually included in his own entry.

7. The guardian for orphans under his care. These are also usually included in his own entry.

Examples of each type of entry follow:

1. The male head of household for his children and/or grandchildren:

Noorddijk, Groningen (Genealogical Department film number 108,928)

Appeared before us, the Registrars in the function of Officers of the Civil Registration of the Municipality of Noorddijk.
Luitje Oomkes residing in Engelberg, who declared that he takes[19] as his family name the name of Oomkes and as his given names Luitje Oomkes, that he has three sons and five daughters, namely:

> Oomke Luitjens age 39 years residing in Engelbert.
> Freerk Luitjens age 35 years residing in Engelbert.
> Jan Luitjens age 30 years residing in Noorddijk.[20]
> Aaltje Luitjens age 43 years residing in Peize.
> Freerkje Luitjens age 37 years residing in Zuidhorn.
> Trijntje Luitjens age 33 years residing in Engelbert.
> Egberdina Luitjens age 28 years residing in Holwierda.
> Margien Luitjens age 26 years residing in Heem.

Signed and dated 9 Jan 1812.

2. The male for himself:

Grijpskerk, Groningen. (Genealogical Department film number 109,116)

Appeared...Simon Martens Reitsema, residing in Pieterzijl, who declared that he maintains as his family name the name of Reitsema as his given name or names the name of Simon *Martins*.

3. The female for herself:

Dokkum, Friesland. (Genealogical Department film number 107,509)

Appeared...Rinske Hendriks, housewife of Pieter Jans Bakker, boatsman, residing in Dokkum, who declared that she takes the name of Saturdag as family name. And has to us, the entry's undersigned, declared that she, because of weakness of her sight, is no longer able to write. Dated 5 May 1826.

4. The widow for her children and/or grandchildren:

Grijpskerk, Groningen. (Genealogical Department film number 109,116)

Appeared...Sjouktje Tjerks residing in Pieterzijl, who declared to accept as her family name the name of Dijkstra and as her given name or names Sjouktje Tjerks. That she has two sons and one daughter, one grandson and two granddaughters, namely:...Tjerk age 41 years residing Grijpskerk,...Auke age 39 years residing in Pieterzijl,...Goirtie age 33 years residing in Doizum,...the grandson...Rienk age 20 years,...the granddaughters...Sijke age 17 years,...Sjouktje age 12 years being children of Klaas Rienks Dijkstra and Wijtske Sijtzens residing on the waard in Grijpskerk.

[The name of the deceased husband is not listed, but from the patronymic of the eldest son, Klass Rienks Dijkstra, it can be assumed that his name was Rienk Klaases or Klaasen.]

5. The widow for her children by more than one husband:

Noorddijk, Groningen. (Genealogical Department film number 108,928)

Appeared...Hilje Jans widow Amels residing in Noorddijk who declared that she accepted as her family name the name of Amels and as given name the name of *Hille* Jans, that she has one son and three daughters, namely: Amel age 20 years residing in Noorddijk, Janna age 22 years residing in Harkstede, Matje age 17 years residing in Noorddijk, and Froukje age 16 years residing as before. That she also has a son and two daughters by her first husband Klaas Oomkes...for which she takes the family name of Oomkes, the son age 31 years named Oomke Klaasens residing in Noorddijk, the daughters Trijntie age 29 years, residing in Groningen, and Freerkjen age 28 years residing in Harkstede.
Signed and dated 8 Jan 1812.

[Here the given names of the deceased husband are not stated, but his patronymic was Amels.]

6. The stepfather for the children of his wife's deceased husband:

Noorddijk, Groningen (Genealogical Department film number 108,928)

Appeared...in the capacity of step-father of the son of the late Jan Heres, during his life residing in Feerwert.[21]
Yle Jans Meidema born 23 march seventeen hundred eighty seven.

7. The guardian for orphans under his care:

Noorddijk, Groningen. (Genealogical Department film number 108,928)

Appeared...in the capacity of guardian over the under aged son of the late Cornelis Klasen of Gernwert.
Klaase Cornelis de Vries, born 5 December seventeen hundred ninety two.

The *naamsaanneming* registers form a link between the records of civil registration and the church registers of the various denominations. Not only do they tie the names of the two periods together, they also give ages, birth dates, and places of residence, especially valuable for those (such as the Mennonites and the Jews) who did not espouse the main religious denominations. Even in situations where the church records are sparse or non-existent, some have been able to extend their pedigrees back to 1725 by using the *naamsaanneming* registers.
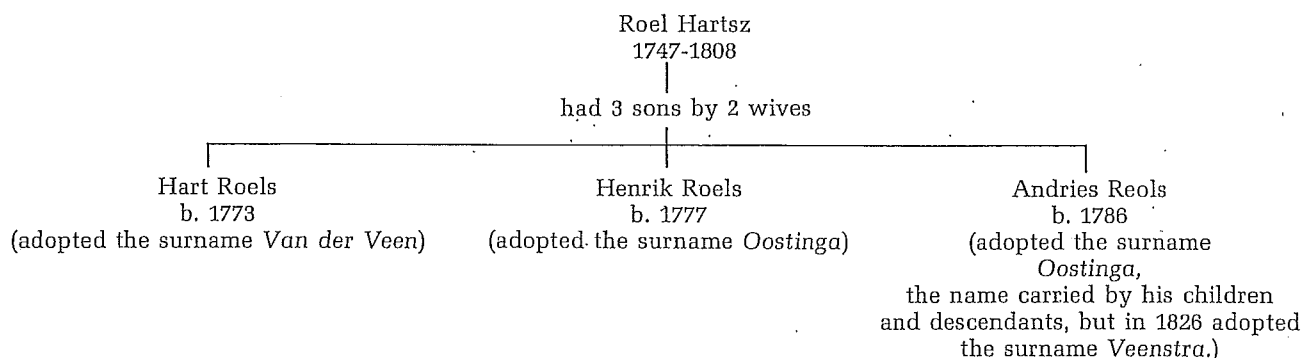
We mentioned earlier that the *naamsaanneming* registers sometimes enable the discovery of collateral branches of various families. An example of this might be useful:

The direct ancestor, Ype Jans, was born in 1748, the son of Jan Ypes and Jelske Heerkes. He took the surname "Viersen."

In a village twelve miles distant one Jelle Dirks also took the surname "Viersen." From his death entry we learned that he was born about 1739, but the names of his parents were not known.

Through searches in the church registers, a connection between these two persons was established, namely: Ype Jan's father Jan Ypes had an older brother named Dirck Ypes who left home while single and married elsewhere to one Frouktjen Jelles. Their second son, named Jelle Dirks, was born in 1738. The common ancestor was Ype Dircks, born in 1661.

As an example of brothers and half-brothers adopting different surnames, consider the three sons of Roel Hartsz of Surhuizum, Friesland:

Roel Hartsz
1747-1808

had 3 sons by 2 wives

Hart Roels	Henrik Roels	Andries Reols
b. 1773	b. 1777	b. 1786
(adopted the surname *Van der Veen*)	(adopted the surname *Oostinga*)	(adopted the surname *Oostinga*, the name carried by his children and descendants, but in 1826 adopted the surname *Veenstra*.)

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[21] Male orphans were under age until they were 25 years; females until they were 21.

The value of the *naamsaanneming* registers to those with Jewish lines has already been indicated. To enhance that value even more, the Stichting Nederlands Joods Familiearchief (Foundation Netherlands Jewish Family Archives), founded 11 Mar 1965, has undertaken a project to abstract the names of Jewish families and file them in alphabetical sequence as an index to the *naamsaanneming* registers of the communities where these families lived. The work is in progress, and much has already been published.[22]

Other Name Changes

Name changes may have occurred for many other reasons. When a child was born out of wedlock he was known by his mother's surname unless recognized by his natural father. If he was recognized by his father later, as when his parents were later married, the surname could be changed at that time. Since 1811 such a change can be found in both the birth and the marriage registers of civil registration. In the birth register a note is made in the margin adjoining the birth entry, and in the marriage register there is an explanation in the text of the entry.

A mistake in the civil registration entry could also result in a name change. Such an error could be corrected, by proper request, through the *Arrondissement Rechtbank* District or Circuit Court, but, if ignored, it could result in a change of name. For example, at his birth in 1830 the son of Jan Soede and Gezina Elisabeth Slok was named Hendrik Slok for his maternal grandfather. His surname, of course, was Soede. When he married, however, his surname was mistakenly recorded as *Slok Soede*. His descendants are still known by this surname.

Name changes or additions may be granted by Royal decree, under certain circumstances. The family names of foundlings and of immigrants from non-European areas were often changed. The names of adopted children could be changed (since 1956 only).

Legislation was adopted in 1966 allowing name changes for those with the most common surnames (such as de Vries, de Jong, de Boer, Smit, Jansen, etc.), which have become so common they are as much a problem as were patronymics prior to 1811. For a change to be allowed, it must be some addition (either prefix or suffix) to the original surname. The new name must be previously unknown.

Surname Peculiarities in the Provinces

It has been estimated by the Naamkundecommissie van de Koninglijke Nederlandse Akedemie Van Wetenschappen (Commission of Name Study of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences) that twenty-five to thirty percent of the original nineteenth century surnames have disappeared, either through failure of male issue or through emigration. However, many new surnames have been added through name changes, immigration, and other factors. The total number of surnames has changed little since the first quarter of the nineteenth century, although the population has grown from two million to more than thirteen million. Thus, there are actually more persons with the same surnames in the country than there were when the government surname decree was issued in 1811.

A complete survey of family names in the Netherlands is being compiled by the Naamkundecommissie van de Koninklijke Nederlandse Akedemie Van Wetenschappen. Since 1963 the commission has been compiling and publishing the *Nederlands Repertorium van Familienamen* (Netherlands Repertory of Family Names), one per province (except the larger cities—Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague—which will each appear in a separate volume). As of 1972 there were volumes available for Drenthe, Friesland, Groningen, Overijssel, Utrecht, Zeeland, and Amsterdam. The study is based on the "return control" slips of the forms of the 1947 cen-

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[22] *Nederlands Joods Familiearchief,* ed. by L. Fuks. (Amsterdam: the archives). Also many of the surnames of Drenthe have been published in E. J. Th. A. M. Van Emstede, *Van Patronymica en Geslachtsnamen in Drenthe* (Patronymics and family names in Drenthe) (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij "Liebaert," 1943).

sus. The value of this study to the genealogist is that it provides information on the types of surnames which dominate in the various provinces, and also suggests where certain surnames probably originated.

The basic name differences of the provinces are listed below, with full recognition of the fact that a province is an administrative entity only and has no control over, nor interest in, the names of its people.

1. **Drenthe:** Nearly ten percent of the surnames of the province contain the *ing(h)e* and *in(c)k* patronymic suffixes, as in Aaldering, Aalderink, etc. Also, the shortened version of inge—nge—as with Luinge, Steenge, etc., appears frequently in the province. Also typical are the *ies, iens* patronymic endings, as in Arkies, Lugies, Luchiens, etc. There are also names which reflect the geographical conditions of the province which contain *heide* (heather) and *veen* (moor).

2. **Friesland:** The most frequent surnames in the province are those with *a, ma, sma, stra,* and *inga* patronymic suffixes as in Pama, Fokkema, Roelsma, Veenstra, Elzinga, etc. The second most common name types are those with the patronymical *es, s, sz, n,* and *ns* endings, as in Doedes, Douwes, Hickesz, Meinesz, Names, Boelen, Tiddens, etc. In 1947 the surname *de Vries* occurred 13,071 times and *de Jong* 12,621 times.

3. **Gelderland:** Those surnames with the patronymic suffixes *in(c)k* and *ing* are quite numerous here, as in Brussink, Hissink, Roelvink, Scholting, Wenting, etc. Also common in the province are the prefixes Klein (small) and Groot (great), as in the farmstead names Klein Voskamp and Groot Voskamp. The *hof* and *loo* endings are frequently found in the province as are two syllable names ending in e, such as Rogge, Rijke, Vinke, etc.

4. **Groningen:** The Frisian patronymic surnames ending with *sema*, such as Ritsema, Geertsema, etc., are typical here. There are also many of the same types of surnames as are found in Friesland and Drenthe. The endings *ker, tjer, huis,* and *wold*, as in Hofker, Kooyker, Moelker (which are derived from occupation), Woltjer, Duintjer, Wiltjer, Berghuis, Evenhuis, Wolthuis, Boekwold, Zwartwold, etc., are native to the province.

5. **Limburg and Noord Brabant:** Here the *mans* endings, as in Botermans, Hagmans, Goemans, etc., are typical. Patronymic surnames ending in the possessive forms *ers* or *ens,* such as Ciujpers, Cremers, Nolens, Raaymakers, Scheeren (des Heren), Schraven (des Graven), etc., are native to Noord Brabant. Of Limburg origin are those names with *ingen* (instead of inden), as with Ingenhoes (instead of Idenhoes),

Ingendaal (instead of Idendaal), Ingenhoven (instead of Indenhoven), etc.

6. **Noord Holland:** In the area north of the Noord-Zeekanaal there are many mono-syllable surnames, many with only three letters, such as Bak, Bal, Bos, Bijl, Dam, Dek, etc. In the same area the patronymic endings *sz* and *x* are also noteworthy, as in Jansz, Pietersz, Willemsz, Dircx, Harcx, etc. These are mostly old forms of Frisian male given names. In the southern part of the province, excluding Amsterdam, the surnames are much the same as in Zuid Holland and Utrecht. No patterns can be found in the conglomeration of surnames in Amsterdam, though a fair number of the names originated in the areas north of Amsterdam and Friesland. Many also had their origins in Germany and Flanders. It is noteworthy that most of the population of Amsterdam has been added since 1870. Between 1870 and 1900 nearly 627,000 persons moved into the city, but 535,510 moved out during the same period. There has been a great turnover of surnames, but many of the old surnames have survived. Of the nearly 2,640 surnames listed in the 1585 tax registers, 2,435 were still there in the 1947 census, though with some altered spellings. Many well-established Jewish surnames were completely destroyed by the Nazi annihilation of some 72,000 persons of Jewish descent during World War II.

7. **Overijssel:** As in Drenthe, the *ing(h)(e)* and *in-(c)k* patronymic endings account for nearly ten percent of the total. Next in frequency are those names with the prefixes *ten* and *ter*, such as ten Brink(e), ten Cate, ter Hove, ter Haar, ter Horst, etc. Third in frequency of appearance are those names with *huis* endings, including Bolhuis, Nienhuis, Oosterhuis, etc. The patronymic ending *sen*, as in Jansen, appears often also. In the southwestern part of the province we find many surnames derived from farmstead names, especially those beginning with Klein (little) and Groot (great). In the eastern portion the terms Old-Oud (old) and Ny-Nieuw (new) are more common.

8. **Utrecht:** Geographical names predominate in the province, especially those with the elements *laar-laer, horst,* and *schoten-schooten.* Equally as common are the names van Doorn, van Schaik, van Leeuwen, van Ginkel, etc., which are derived from places and farms in Utrecht. Some surnames from this province come from general geographical expressions such as van den Brink, van Vliet, etc., while some denote specific names in the Netherlands and elsewhere, with the addition of the term *van* (meaning "from") as with van Aalst, van Eldik, van Maurik, van Sevenhoven, van Antwerpen, van Lil, van Pommeren, van Trier, etc. Some of these have been corrupted from the original, as with van Keekum (from

Kedichem), van Stolk (from Stolwijk), and van Gorkum (from Gorinchem).

9. **Zeeland:** The patronymic ending *se* is quite common in Zeeland, especially in Walcheren and Zuid Beveland. Names like Janse, Louwerse, Jobse, Dingemanse, Roelse, Joosse, and Adriaanse are the most numerous of this type. Among these patronymics are many given names taken from the Old Testament, also very popular with the Huguenots. Many of the surnames have a localized character, a good share of them being Flemish (i.e., from Flanders) with the old spellings, as with de Konnick (instead of de Koning) and Craenenbrouck (instead of Kranenbroek). Most Huguenot (French-Walloon) surnames are found in West Zeeuws Flanders and in Walcheren. Also important in the province are the patronymic ending *sons*, the prefixes *de, d'* and *ver*, and the suffixes *aert* and *g(h)e*.

10. **Zuid Holland:** Many surnames contain the prefixes *van, vande(n), van der*, and *ver*, mostly in connection with geographical designations. In the Alblasserwaard and Vijfherenlanden one-syllable surnames such as Lels, Mak, Mes, Pot, are quite common. On the islands in the delta the prefixes *de* and *den*, as in de Allerliefste, de Kwaadsteniet, den Arend, den Boer, and den Hartog, are common. In the larger cities of the province, French and German surnames are often noted, with Dutch corruptions.

Though the aforementioned patterns are significant, it should be noted that most surnames of the province are similar to those in Noord Holland, Utrecht, Noord Brabant, and Zeeland, from which it has drawn a substantial portion of its population in recent centuries.

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