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Anneke Jans in Fact and Fiction

by George Olin Zabriskie, F.A.S.G.

Today Anneke Jans Bogardus is one of early New York State's (literally New Netherland's) most famous citizens. But such was not the case during her own lifetime. Years after her death, she gained fame and fortune by having descendants who initiated one of the country's most famous litigations. In this long series of lawsuits, the claimants asked for ownership, in whole or part, of real estate on Manhattan that had belonged to Anneke. They claimed that Trinity Church had illegally acquired title, and that the property rightfully belonged to the descendants of Anneke Jans Bogardus.

But the church had always held legal title, and the courts, without exception, so ruled. The property in question was granted in 1636 to Roelof Janszen, Anneke's first husband. It ran along the Hudson shoreline, then at about Washington Street, for seven tenths of a mile from present Warren Street to just above Canal Street (at the entrance to the Holland Tunnel). The eastern line ran irregularly from Chambers Street and Broadway to above Canal Street at Varick. It was sixty-two acres of mediocre farm and grazing land, swamp and chalky hill, in which Anneke had owned dower rights. Her Roelofs children owned the rest. It was still of little value when New York's northward expansion reached it about 1750. By 1800, the swamp had been drained and the land improved to the point that commercial buildings and private dwellings had been built on it.

In 1639 the "plantation [was] new and consist[ed] of recently cleared land [and had] a tobacco house and [was] fenced." In 1642 the lessee was to "use all possible diligence to clear the land." It did have a house in 1642, which, in 1646 "may [have] need[ed] to be re-roofed." In 1651, the new lessee was to "put a new roof on the . . . house," and "to fence in and keep tight the land. . ." How different from the glowing descriptions in some of the legendary accounts! Domine Everardus Bogardus, Anneke's second husband, did not in his own right, or for the Reformed Church, own land which some accounts claimed was adjacent to, and became merged with, the Roelof Janszen farm. The farm was often called the Domine's Bouwerie, and it was merged with the adjacent Company's Bouwerie. From her second marriage, Anneke did hold dower rights to a house near the fort in New Amsterdam, and to eighty-four acres of land, called Domine's Hook, on the Long Island shore of the East River near the Hellgate. The two, Domine's Bouwerie and the Domine's Hook, became badly confused in many ways, even on maps and in legal briefs. Also confusion has arisen between the entire Trinity Church Farm, and that portion which was originally the Roelof Janszen farm (CDM 7, 19 [but the lease pertains to the East River, not the North], 20, 36 [lessor was Do.Bogardus], 55).¹

At each recounting of the legendary claims, the sixty-two acres of Manhattan farm and grazing land has grown in size and value until a year ago it was described as "a large portion of Manhattan real estate" [62 of 14,000 acres!]. And the claimants continued to grow in numbers; but finally the pointless litigation ceased. Somewhere along the line of this count-down to zero litigation, someone provided a new legendary focal point for Anneke's real and self styled, fortune hunting descendants by creating for her a royal ancestor, complete with an unclaimed royal fortune. Again the claimants increased, and Anneke became even more famous. Claims and counter-claims appeared in books, magazines and newspapers.

In 1925 and 1926 (with some carry-over into the next six years), the late John Reynolds Totten discussed these farmland and royal ancestry claims and attempted to evaluate the royalty claim in "The Record" (NYGBR) volumes 56 and 57. He reached the basic conclusion that the available evidence did not support the traditional assertions. We do not intend to "correct" or "amend" the accounts prepared by

Mr. Totten, or to duplicate his discussions. We will present new evidence that he did not have as readily available as we do in this day of microfilms and photocopies. We shall first discuss the factual origins of Anneke Jans, her husbands, mother and sister. Then we shall discuss the claimed descent of Anneke Jans from William the Silent of Orange-Nassau.²

The only real facts that have become known about Anneke Jans as she arrived here in 1630 are that she was:

- (1) a resident of Amsterdam just before coming to New Netherland,
- (2) a daughter of Tryntje Jonas, van Maesterland, a midwife,
- (3) sister of Marritje Jans,
- (4) the wife of Roelof Janszen, van Maesterland, employed in early 1630 in Amsterdam, to be a farmer at Rensselaerswyck, and
- (5) the mother of two [not three] accompanying children. Sara and Tryntje Roelofs, who were born in Amsterdam {Lijntje died before the trip}

The following additional information has been obtained recently from Amsterdam church records: 3

Marriage intention, 1 April 1623, Reformed Oude Kerk: Roelof Jansson (his mark "R"), born in Maesterland, a seaman, aged 21 years, having no parents [to grant parental consent], assisted by Jan Gerritsz., his nephew; residing 3 1/2 years at the St. Tunis gate, of the one part; and Anna Jans (her mark: "+"), born in Vleckere in Norway, aged 18 years, assisted by trijn roeloffs, her mother: residing [duration not given] at the same place, [that is, at the St. Tunis gate] of the second part.

Marriage record, 18 April 1623, Reformed Nieuw Kerk: Roelof Jansz. and Anna Jans

Baptismal records, Lutheran Kerk: Lijntje, bap. 21 July 1624; parents, Roelof Jansz., mother's name not given; witnesses: Annetgen jans, Stijntje Barents. Sara, bap. 5 April 1627; parents, Roeloff Jansen, mother's name not given; witnesses: Assueris Jansen, Stijntje Barents. Trijntgen, bap. 24 June 1629; parents, Roeloff Jansz., mother's name not given; witnesses: Cornelis Sijverts, Trijntgen Siewerts.

Anneke Jans was born in Flekkeroy, a village on an island of the same name in Vest Agder, Norway, and four miles south of the city of Kristiansand. Roelof Janszen was born in Marstrand, a village on an island of the same name, now in Goteburg Och Bohus, Sweden, and about 18 miles northwest of the city of Boteburg. Marstrand was in Bohusland, a historic section of Norway that was ceded to Sweden in 1658. So both Anneke and Roelof were Norwegians by birth, but may have been of Dutch ancestry.⁴

At Rensselaerswyck Roelof farmed the de Laets Burg farm on the east bank of the Hudson, near Mill Creek [Normans Kill] in the present city of Rensselaer. While living there Roelof was appointed a schepen [magistrate] by van Rensselaer, but he and the others so appointed were not sworn in and never served. In April 1634, Roelof was replaced as farmer by Gerrit Theunisz. de Reux under uncertain circumstances. He and his men had served most, if not all, of their regular period of employment and did not "desert" van Rensselaer as claimed by most writers. Roelof had not been a successful farmer and was in debt to van Rensselaer when replaced. In 1637 van Rensselaer said that he had canceled the debt "long ago" (VRBM pssim).

When Roelof left the farm in Rensselaerswyck apparently he, his family, and his mother-in-law moved

down river to New Amsterdam, where he became an employee of the West India Company. Roeloff probably farmed one of the company bouweries, and likely continued to do so until his death in 1636. He did not go to Brazil during this two year period, as has been suggested.

In March 1638, before or concurrently with her marriage to Domine Bogardus, Anneke Jans pledged a reasonable share of their father's estate to "the surviving legitimate children" of Roeloff Janszen. In June 1642 this agreement could not be found; so on 21 June 1642, "Annitjen Jans, formerly widow of the late Rouloff Jansen from Maesterland, and at present wife of Everardus Bogardus, minister here," again promised to pay her Roeloffs children "from her first available means," 1000 Carolus guilders, Holland currency: 200 guilders to each on coming of age [25 years]. These five surviving children, their ages on 21 June 1642 were: Sara, aged about 16; Trijntje, aged 13; Sijtje aged 11; Jan, aged 9; and Annitjen, aged 6 years (CDM19).

Soon after Anneke's marriage to Domine Bogardus he recorded the first of three powers of attorney designed "to collect from the honorable directors of the Chartered West India Company, the sum of two hundred and seventeen guilders, earned by the late Rouloff Jansen . . . of the said gentlemen, which was remitted in the year 1635 to the orphan masters of the city of Amsterdam and has not yet been received by them . . . as appears by the Book of Monthly Wages sent from New Netherland by said ship" [the Eendrach 'which left Amsterdam in Early May and returned to Amsterdam before December, 1635.'] The first was issued 12 August 1638 to Wouter van Twiller, but was not signed and may never have been used; the second was dated 16 April 1639 to Hendrik Cornelissen van Vorst and the third on 11 October 1640 to van Twiller (CDM 3, 6, 14).

Anneke Jans' second husband, Everardus Bogardus, was the second domine of the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam, arriving in 1633. He was born in 1607, probably in Veenendaal, Utrecht, as Evert Bogaert, the son of Willem Jansz. Bogaert and his second wife Susanna Adriaensdr. van Ruyteveld. He studied at the University of Leyden, and after serving as a voorleser in Guinea in West Africa, was ordained and sent to New Amsterdam. Mr. P. A. Bogaard of De Meen, Utrecht, in his recent excellent article, "Dutch Ancestry of Domine Everardus Bogardus" (de Halve Maen July and October 1971, January 1972), wrote in conclusion:

"A man of complicated character, Domine Bogardus experienced many difficulties during his ministry in New Amsterdam, especially in his relationship with Director General Wouter van Twiller and the latter's successor, William Kieft. His relations with Director General Kieft were such that they agreed to have their charges and countercharges heard and judged by the Classis of Amsterdam. They went aboard the ship De Princesse which sailed from New Amsterdam on August 17, 1647. They did not reach their fatherland, however, since the ship was wrecked in Bristol Channel and both were drowned [on 27 September 1647]."

After learning of her husband's death by drowning off the coast of Wales, Anneke moved from her house near the Fort in New Amsterdam to Fort Orange. On 15 August 1648 Domine Megapolensis wrote that Domine Bogardus' "widow came to Fort Orange. . . to make a living here. She has nine living children, as well by her former husband, as from Domine Bogardus, and besides this she is burdened with considerable debt."

Upon reaching Fort Orange, Anneke and her unmarried children almost certainly went to live with her daughter Fytje and her husband, Pieter Hartgers. On 23 April 1652 Anneke Bogardus received a patent to a lot in the village, for which Pieter Hartgers agreed to pay an annual ground rent of four beavers, and on which Pieter built her a house. On 29 January 1663 (New style), Dirck van Schelluyne, the notary at Beverwyck, recorded the will of "Anneke Jans, first widow of Roeloff Jansen of Materlant, then widow of Rev. Everhardus Bogardus, living at Beverwyck." Her seven surviving children, and the two daughters

of her deceased daughter Fytje were her heirs. The four Roelofs children were to be given 250 guilders each “out of the receipts or the value of the . . . Bouwerie [on Manhattan] before any other division takes place....”

On 23 February 1663, her son Jan Roelofsen paid for the use of the burial pall. So we may assume that Anneke was buried on that day, or shortly before. The services no doubt took place in the old “Blockhouse Church” built near her home in 1656. She was doubtless buried in the close-by regular Dutch Calvinist Burying Ground. In 1805 this burying ground was dismantled and its remains removed to the public State Street Burying Ground. By 1867 the contents of all of the graves in the State Street Burying Grounds had been removed to the Albany Rural Cemetery at Menands. Her remains undoubtedly were among those ultimately moved to Menands, but as this is written, we do not know with certainty their whereabouts.⁵

There appears to be no reason why we should repeat the details of the sale of various parcels of land after the death of Anneke, or of the long series of litigation over the Domine’s Bouwerie. Mr. Totten discussed these actions, as did others.

Roelof Janszen, van Marstrand, and his wife Anneke Jans, van Flekkeroy, had six children whose surnames were Roelofs for the five girls, and Roelofszen for the one boy. None was surnamed Jansen. These six children:

i. Lijntje, born in Amsterdam, was baptized there in the Lutheran Church 21 July 1624. She died before her parents arrived in New Netherland in May 1630.

ii. Sara, born in Amsterdam, late in 1626 or early in 1627, was baptized there in the Lutheran Church 5 April 1627. (On 21 June 1642 she was “about sixteen years old,” and her marriage record said she was born in Amsterdam.) Her will, dated 29 July 1692, with a codicil of 7 August 1693, was proved 21 October 1693. Sara married first, with intention dated 29 June 1642, in the Dutch Reformed Church in New Amsterdam, Dr. Hans Kierstede, a surgeon. She married second, with intention dated 1 September 1669 in New York, Cornelis Van Borsum. She married third, with intention dated 21 July 1683, in New York, Elbert Elbertsen Stoothoff, as his second wife.⁶

iii. Trijntje was born in Amsterdam in 1629, and baptized there in the Lutheran Church on 24 June 1629. (On 21 June 1642, she was thirteen years old, and her marriage record said she was born in Amsterdam.) She married first, with intention dated 24 February 1647 in New Amsterdam, Willem (de) Kay. After 16 September 1652, she married Lucas Rodenbrug, vice director of the West India Company at Curacao. She was his widow on 17 April 1657. On 24 April 1658, with intention dated 29 March, in New Amsterdam, she married third, Johannes Pieterszen Verbrugge / Van Brug / Ver Brugge.⁷

iv. Sijtje, at times Fijtje, was born about 1631, probably on the de Laets Burg farm in the present city of Rensselaer. (On 21 June 1642 she was eleven years old.) She died before her mother, probably in 1659. She married Pieter Hartgers.

v. Jan was born about 1633 on de Laets Burg farm. (On 21 June 1642 he was nine years old, and on 10 February 1654, 20 years old.) He was unmarried at the time of his mother’s death. It has been said that he later married Annatje Pieters, and that both were killed in 1690 at Schenectady.

vi. Annatje was born about 1636 in New Amsterdam. (On 21 June 1642 she was six years

old.) She died before her mother, probably in childhood.

Domine Everardus Bogardus and his wife, Anneke Jans had four sons surnamed Bogardus. All four were born in New Amsterdam, and undoubtedly baptized there by their father. However, available records are not early enough to cover the baptism of Willem, the first son. The four children:

vii. Willem born about 1639, was baptized before the first recorded baptism of 25 September 1639. He died in New York City in 1711. He married first, with intention dated 29 August 1659 in New Amsterdam, Wijntje Sijbrants. He married second, about 1668, Walbruga de Sille, widow of Frans Kregier.

viii. Cornelis was baptized 9 September 1640. He died in Beverwyck / Albany before 6 May 1666. He married, as her first husband, Helena Teller.

ix Jonas was baptized on 4 January 1643. He was living on 9 March 1670/71; no evidence of marriage.

x. Pieter was baptized 2 April 1645. He died in 1703 in Kingston, N. Y. He married Wyntje Bosch.

Anneke Jans' mother came to New Netherland before the Roelofs family moved from Rensselaerswyck to New Amsterdam in 1634, and she may have come to America with the family in 1630. Her full name, as assembled from various source records was Trijntje (given name), Roelofs [datter] (patronymic, or father's given name--from Anneke's marriage intention), Jonas (possessive surname based on given name of husband), van Maesterland (place name, usually based on birthplace). Thus Tryntje (Roelofs) Jonas Van Maesterland was most likely born in Marstrand, now in Sweden, to a father whose given name was Roelof. Her husband's given name was Johan, a Teutonic name usually transliterated by the Dutch to Jan or Johannes, and at times, to Jonas as in this case. Two daughters of Johan and Tryntje are known, that is, Anneke and Marritje. Their full patronymic was Johansdatter, or as transliterated and abbreviated, Jans.

Tryntje Jonas was not, as has been stated in various accounts, the mother or grandmother of (1) Wolfert Webber, or any other children surnamed Webber, (2) Arientje Jans, first the wife of Jan Van de Water, then the first wife of Govert Loockerman, (3) Hester Jans, sister of Ariaentje, and wife of Jacob Wolphertsen Van Couwenhoven, (4) Tryntje Jans, wife of Rutger Jacobsen Rutgers (actually the daughter of Jan Jansen van Breestede), (5) Anna, Marritje, Maria, or Anna Maria, who married Hacke Bruysen in 1653 (his wife was a sister of Corsen Jans Eggert), or Cornelis Janszen Van Hoorn in 1659 (his wife was the step daughter of Fransoys Paschot and was born in Dutch Brazil.), or Christian Barentsen Van Hoorn (his wife was not Anna Maria, but Jannetje Jans, born about 1629 in Utrecht), or (5) any other grandchildren surnamed Jans.⁸

Tryntje Jonas served as the official midwife for the West India Company in New Amsterdam. On 26 November 1635 the Amsterdam Chamber of the West India Company recorded in its minutes that a letter had been received from her, "requesting an increase in wages and some necessaries to.... [The sentence was not finished and nothing was said about the action taken.]" We can surmise that she had probably served at least a year before asking for an increase in wages. For the lack of a more exact date, we assume that she began serving by the second half of 1634. We do not know when she stopped serving or when she died. She appears to have served until her death or the onset of her terminal illness; for on 11 August 1647, as Domine Bogardus was about to sail to the Netherlands, Dirck Cornelissen van Wensveen, husband of Marritje Jans, gave Domine Bogardus, the other son-in-law of Tryntje Jonas, a power of attorney to collect from the West India Company the sum of 254 guilders, 2 stivers and 8 pennies "as appears on the Book of Monthly Wages, No. F. folio 17," which was due at the death of "Trijn Jonas van

Maesterland, in her lifetime, midwife here in New Netherland.”

That power of attorney was lost on 27 September 1647, when the Domine was drowned. On 17 August 1649, Anneke Jans, then widow of Domine Bogardus, gave power of attorney to the Domine's brother, Cornelis Willemsen Bogaert, living in Leyden, to collect money due by the West India Company in Amsterdam to her as “heirress of her mother Tryn Jonasz. [not Jansen as in CDM: 49], deceased, late midwife here,” and also to collect “such money as may be due to her late husband, Everardus Bogardus...together with whatever may be coming to her or her late husband from any other private individuals, whether friends or blood-inheritance or otherwise.” This was signed, “Dis ist X merck van Anneke Jans, self geselt.”⁹

1. A.J.F. van Laer's translations of the documents in the first four volumes of Dutch manuscripts in the New York State Library (the first of which was completely destroyed and the other damaged in the 1911 fire at the library) will be issued later this year. The author used microfilm copies of them.

2. Major compiled sources:

John Reynolds Totten “Anneke Jans (1607-8? - 1663) and Her Two Husbands, Roelof Jans (or Jansen) and Rev. (Domine) Everardus Bogardus and Their Descendants to the Third Generation Inclusive.” REC. 56:201-43. “Anneke Jans Bogardus (1599-1663) and Her Possible Blood Connection with the Sybrant, Selyns and Webber Families in New Netherland.” REC.57:11-54, 119-42. Editorial comment on these articles and those by de Boer and by Hoffman (see below): REC. 57:81-88, 402-405; 58:184-91; 63:119-30. “Grevenraedt Family.” REC. 60:41-71, 127-53, 232-53. “Brouwer (Brower-Brewer) Family Notes” REC. 67:103-11, 217-29.

Louis P. de Boer, “Selyns-Kock-Webber and Other Family Relations” REC.57:365-81.

William J. Hoffman, “Notes on Old Dutch-American Family Relations” REC. 63:4-21, 11-19, 309. “An Armory of American Families of Dutch Descent” REC. 64:146-50; 72:227, 309-10.

John O. Evjen, “Scandinavian Immigrants in New York, 1630-1674”, Minneapolis, 1916.

Ruth Putman, Annetje Jans' Farm in Historic New York, Series I, Volume I, Port Washington, NY (probably by her, without a byline; translated from the English:) “Anneke Jans Bogardus en hare Bezitting” in *Het Nieuws Van Den Dag* [The News of the Day], Amsterdam, 20 and 22 July, 2 August 1886.

Aimee Roberts Thomasson, *Our Kith and Kin*, Tuscaloosa, AL, n.d. Thomas Bentley Wikoff, *Anneke Jans Bogardus and her New Amsterdam Estate, Past and Present, Romance of a Dutch Maiden and Its Present Day Sequel*, Historical, Legal, Genealogical, Indianapolis, 1924.

George Olin Zabriskie, “Founding Families of New Netherland, Numbers 5 and 6, The Roelofs and Bogardus Families” in *de Halve Maen* [quarterly of the Holland Society of New York] October 1972, January and April 1973, which delves more deeply into the historical aspects than does the present article, and less into the Webber, Cock and Selyns families, and has more detailed reference citations.

3. Registers of the Dutch Reformed Churches in Amsterdam, microfilm call numbers of the Genealogical

Society Library in Salt Lake City, Utah: 113,190; 113,358. Registers of the Lutheran Churches in Amsterdam, call number 113,415. These and similar films may be viewed in Salt Lake City, or at any Latter Day Saints Branch Genealogical Library.

4. Columbia-Lippincott Gazetteer p. 619; Flekkeroy [58.05N 8.03E] Vest Agder, Norway, 4 miles south of Kirstiansand. Is coastal resort, with good harbor. Has old fortress. p. 1158: Marstrand [57.53N 11.34E] Och Bohus, Sweden. 18 miles northwest of Goteborg. Founded 1225, 14th century church, 17th century fortress. (Known as Maesterland, Marstrand was a Dutch commercial out-post in Hanseatic League days.)

5. ER 237; FW 55; "Deacons' Accounts, 1654-1664" in Dutch Settlers of Albany Yearbook, 1932-1934, p.4; Albany County Records, Notorial Papers 1:296.

6. MDC 11, 34, 53; Howard S. F. Randolph, "The Kierstede Family," REC. 55:224-33. 329-38.

7. MDC 14, 22; William J. Hoffman, "De Huybert-Roodenburgh," REC. 71:241-2; John Ross Delafield, "The Van Brugh Family," REC. 66:2-11, 166-77.

8. Dutch Reformed Church Registers: Haerlem proclamation, G. S. call number 115,554; Amsterdam intention (Oude Kerk) 113,200; Amsterdam marriage (Oude Kerk) 113,365; Lincoln C. Cocheu "The Van Kouwenhoven-Conover Family," REC. 70:353-4.

9. CDM 40, 49; A. J. F. van Laer, ed. "Minutes of the Amsterdam Chamber of the Dutch West India Company, 1635-1636," REC. 49:222.