



Somsen horizon

Volume 25 – number 34 – December 2022

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- ◆ *Updates From the August 2022 Worldwide Somsen Reunion in Holland, MI USA!!!*
- ◆ *Doesburg honors resistance fighter Frederik Hendrik Somsen 1918 – 1944 with nameplate*
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Colophon

Somsen Horizon is issued by the Somsen Foundation.
Published: December 2022.

Printings: Dutch: 130, English: 100

Copy and pictures for the next issue: info@somsen.org or somsen@oudzelhem.nl**Supporters**

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Lay-out: Ruud Wassink
 Printed by: Arboris Kopietotaal B.V., Zelhem

We gladly permit copying of articles on condition that the source is mentioned.**Contents**

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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



On the cover

Reunion participants 2022

Preface

by Johan Somsen [1089]



Johan Somsen

It has been a long time since I was able to write this foreword because the history of our board has gone through an exciting rollercoaster. After Oscar Somsen's term of office, it seemed for a while that our family foundation no longer had a viability. Younger generations have different interests and are often very busy with work and family, which puts these kinds of activities under

pressure.

Out of concern that the candle would go out, a few veterans, Theo Somsen, Harry Somsen and the under-signed have picked up the thread again and especially Theo and Harry deserve a lot of praise for the work they do for our family foundation. I myself have not been able to make a major contribution because my life has changed dramatically. I ended up in the hands of doctors and due to changes in my private life I spend a large part of my time in Curaçao. I also regret very much that I was not able to attend the sixth reunion in Holland MI, but it is no different.

In this magazine you will find beautiful articles about the Worldwide Somsen Reunion in the USA where Theo and Oscar were the only representatives from the Netherlands. It breathes a beautiful atmosphere and also offers confidence for the future of our family foundation.

That brings me right back to the age-old question of whether there are people who want to help put their shoulders to the wheel and if you do not see any possibilities yourself then you may know a Somsen of a younger generation who can be willing to do so.

We also had to say goodbye to Dick Somsen. In this magazine you will find an in memoriam about him in which he is put in the spotlight more time.

It remains for me to wish you a lot of reading pleasure and also all the absolute best wishes in your lives.

Johan Somsen [1089]

6th Worldwide Somsen Family Reunion 2022 in Mosaics

by Theo Somsen [227]

Mosaic 1: Holland Michigan

The 6th Worldwide Somsen Family Reunion in Holland (Michigan-USA) was a feast of recognition. In that place you stumble across the name 'Holland' and 'Dutch'. Streets, shops, breweries, restaurants, even an open-air village (Dutch Village) annex amusement park adorn themselves with those names. As a visitor you must be stupid not to understand that this city was once founded by emigrants from the Netherlands.

The organizing committee therefore chose a perfect location for this reunion. And not only that, they also presented the participants with a particularly attractive and pleasant program.

From 7 to 9 August, the more than eighty participants could enjoy that program and of course especially each other. Again, a Feast of Recognition, because some participants had not seen each other for 10 years (the 4th reunion in New Ulm) or for 5 years (the 5th reunion in Aalten / IJzerlo).



Holland Michigan - Dutch Village

Mosaic 2: Participants

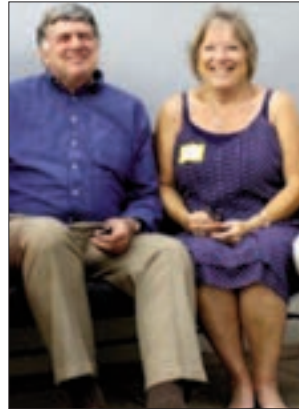
It was (and is!) striking that most of the participants are all descendants of Somsens, who once emigrated from the Netherlands in three different years.

1851 Hendrik Jan Somsen 1801-1863 [577] > USA
 1881 Jan Hendrik Somsen 1850-1929 [308] > USA
 1951 Bernard Hendrik Huitink 1923-2009 [1401], son of Leida Berendina Somsen 1884-1965 [1231] > Canada.

Mosaic 3: The 1851 Participants



Stephen Somsen [2459] &
 Jeannie Somsen [773]



Kaye Kogelschatz-Ridley
 [2533] & Ken Fowler

Mosaic 4: The 1881 Participants



Coby [2699], Evy [2696], Phil [2685] & Leah [2698]
 Somsen-Van Bruggen



Willem & Minnie
 Wernlund-Somsen

And, remarkably, a large number of descendants of Jan Hendrik Somsen's eldest daughter Harmina Hendrika (Minnie) 1878-1957 [320]. In 1906 she married Willem Wernlund 1876-1953 [321].

The Wernlunds also lived in Baldwin, Wisconsin near the Somsens.

It is not entirely clear where the Wernlunds came from. Wernlund is a Scandinavian name, probably Swedish.

Nevertheless, Wernlunds already lived in Amsterdam in the 18th century. They probably came to Amsterdam thanks to the many trade contacts that Amsterdam maintained with the Scandinavian countries. And from Amsterdam they emigrated to Baldwin, USA.



Wolter [804], John [802], Celia [801] & James [803]
 Wernlund



Paul Wernlund [3861], Carol Vandamme-Wernlund [3863] &
 Tim Hale, Joyce Fox

Willem and Minnie Wernlund-Somsen had six children, including Geziena Aleida (Celia) 1907-1995 [801]. Celia married Oscar Bernhard Berkseth [3841]. They had no fewer than eight children, some of whom attended the reunion.

The Berkseths also lived in Baldwin and formed thanks to the marriage with Celia Wernlund-Somsen afterwards actually the 3rd, 4th and 5th generation after Jan Hendrik Somsen, the emigrant! And they still feel connected to their Dutch origins because many of them took the lead in this Somsen-Wernlund-Berkseth-Huinink reunion (see Reunion-Mosaic 7: The Organizing Committee).



*Greg Berkseth [3856], Grace Emmert-Berkseth [3855],
Jack Berkseth [3854], Ann Kerr-Berkseth [3853] &
Marilyn Olson-Lear (Berkseth) [3850]*

Mosaic 5: The 1951 Participants (Canadians)

Bernhard Huitink 1923-2009 [1401] emigrated to Canada shortly after WW-II. The Netherlands was in ruins and almost everything was lacking. Moreover, they were afraid of a war with the Russians; the so-called Cold War had begun. Bernhard's sons Gerrit (Gerry) and Willem (Bill) Huinink still keep good memories of their father Bernhard's mother as grandsons: Leida Berendina Somsen 1884-1965 [1231]. She was born in the Netherlands, did not go with her son Bernard to Canada and died in the Netherlands. Isn't it wonderful that they also cherish their Dutch origins and were present?!



Bill & Gerry Huinink

Mosaic 6: The Dutch Participants



Theo Somsen [227] & sister Hanna van Os-Somsen [392]

A well-known Dutch expression is: It costs something, but then you also have something!

Four Dutch Somsens had that for it and enjoyed it. All descendants of Derk Somsen [225] the three years younger brother of Jan Hendrik Somsen, who emigrated to the USA in 1881.



Oscar Somsen [2040] & Yeng Somsen-Nacion [2042]

Mosaic 7: The Organizing Committee

That committee delivered a formidable performance, as a result of which all participants strengthened the mutual family ties, made them future-proof and offered an extremely interesting and varied program.

As a result, 25 years after the first Worldwide Somsen Reunion in 1997, many are looking forward to the 7th Somsen Reunion in 2027 !



*Reunion Comitee: Shannon Proetti-Kerr [3901],
Becky Errigo-Kerr [3899], Edward Rice Sr. [3843],
Pat & Pamela Rice [3848-3847], Edward Rice Jr. [3849],
Jacqueline Winquist-Olsen [3893] & Charlene Cobb*

Mosaic 8: Gadgets

Flags, sweets, magnet souvenirs and what not: the reunion committee always provided a perfect decoration!





Mosaic 9: Activities

The program of course offered plenty of opportunity to meet each other; terrific!

In addition, a clever presentation about the Somsens who emigrated in three 'waves' to the USA (1851, 1881) and Canada (1951). And of course, we went out, including to Dutch Village and a Dinner Cruise, sailing on Lake Michigan.



Mosaic 10: Hope for the Future

Well, 25 years after the 1st Worldwide Somsen-Reunion in the Netherlands (1997) the 6th in the USA. The American descendants of Somsens, Werlunds and Berkseths made it a wonderful family event. And there is hope for the future because look: new generations are on the way!



Joey & Shannon Proetti-Kerr, Becky, Jon & Ryan Errigo-Kerr, Ann Kerr-Berkseth, Cole Proetti, Brigitte Kerr & Chris Bell



Jacqueline Winquist-Olson, Ali, Aubrie, Marilyn Berkseth (Olson-Lear) & Tom Winquist



*Meekel family (Canada):
Renee Meekel-Huinink, Marissa, Pria, Kalan,
Jaden, Murray Meekel*

**THANK YOU and SEE YOU
in THE NETHERLANDS
in 2027!**



Footnotes

1. I have not been able to show all activities and participants, but on request I can still be of service to you via theosomsen@planet.nl
2. The printed photos were taken by Rinnah (step-daughter Brad Olson [3892]), Stephen Somsen [2459] & Theo Somsen [227], many thanks for that!

Updates From the August 2022 Worldwide Somsen Reunion in Holland, MI USA!!!

by Jacqueline Winquist-Olsen (3893)

In August 2022, the Somsen Reunion began in Holland, MI to celebrate 25 years of Reunions! As you can see from the picture, we had many in attendance.

There were games to get to know each other, informational and exciting presentations about our family history, great food, beautiful weather, tours of Dutch Village and watching Dutch dancing (including a wooden shoe flying off one of the dancers!), and it ended with a sunset Dinner Cruise!

Since so many people use their phones to take photos, we are sure that there were photos that many of you would like to share with all of us! Please send your photos to:

SomsenReunion22@gmail.com

and we will consolidate them in one location for all to see!

The link for photos we have received thus far is <https://jwinquist.passgallery.com/-somsenreunion22/gallery>

Check back to this link often as we will continue to add in more photos!

Meanwhile, here are some initial pictures for you to enjoy!



Marilyn Olson-Lear
&
Theo Somsen:

*the only ones
who attended all
six Somsen
Worldwide
Reunions
(1997-2022)*



Doesburg honors resistance fighter Frederik Hendrik Somsen 1918 – 1944 with nameplate

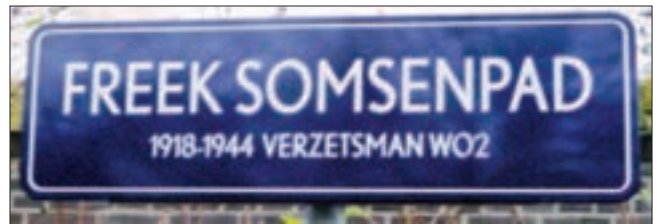
By Henk IJbema & Harry Somsen [146]

What is known about Frederik Hendrik Somsen?



Het huis Doesburg

This raises many questions at Het Huis Doesburg: the story is that Freek went into hiding in 1942 after the call for the Arbeitseinsatz (slave labor in Germany) and joined the Resistance Group Soeren under the pseudonym of Joop Haneman. Among other things, he participates in robberies of distribution offices and becomes the leader of a gang of resistance fighters, the KP Laag Soeren. The German Sicherheitsdienst gets on his trail. To put Freek under pressure, his wife was taken hostage in the House of Detention in Arnhem from November 1943 to March 1944.



Streetsign Freek Somsenpad

She is then pregnant with her second child. On 4 April 1944, Freek was arrested on the train. He is locked up in prisons in Amsterdam and Scheveningen and eventually goes to camp Vught. From Vught he can maintain contact with his family with the help of some illegally smuggled notes. He hears of the birth of his second son, named after him. He writes to his family that after several interrogations, he has now been imprisoned in a death row in the bunker in camp Vught. The worst is to be feared.

On 5 September 1944, the day before hundreds of prisoners were transported from camp Vught to the Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück concentration camps, Frederik Hendrik Somsen died in front of the firing squad.

The day of his 26th birthday

Much more is not known, in the family goes the story

that he was on the train with his wife when he was caught, it turns out not to be true.

+++++

Introduction

Frederik Hendrik Somsen (hereafter referred to as Freek)[47] was born on 5 September 1918 in Aalten. In 1927 the Somsen family moved to Doesburg. Freek is the eldest of nine children. On 26 January 1940 he married 19-year-old Johanna Wilhelmina Beek, nickname: Jans [662]. His profession is metal worker and he works in Dieren. As a conscript, he fought as a 22-year-old in the May days of 1940 at the Grebbeberg.



Freek Somsen

There he was taken prisoner of war and taken to Germany. After some time, the prisoners are released and demobilized. Fortunately, Freek returns in time for the birth of his first son Wim [663].

After moving from Aalten to Doesburg, the Somsen family first lives at a different address, where three children were born. In 1936 Freek had his father Derk Jan Somsen [40] build a larger house at Ooipoortwal 5 in Doesburg, opposite his Wire Braiding and Metalware Factory Ooipoortwal 6. In the telephone book of 1942 mentioned as: D.J. Somsen Draadvlechterij en Metaalwaren. Telephone K8334-437.

After completion, the Somsen family moves to their new home with eight children. Leendert Hendrik (Henk)[55] was born in this new home on 12 June 1937.

After the war, the street name Ooipoortwal 5 was changed to Schout at Nacht Doormansingel 5.



Schout bij Nacht Doormansingel 5

Resistance group

Freek Somsen cannot accept the German occupation of the Netherlands and the persecution of Dutch Jewish people. He becomes involved in helping Jews to go into hiding. A small resistance group form around Freek. After a call for the Arbeitseinsatz (slave labor) in Germany, he went into hiding and joined the illegal resistance movement. His pseudonym is Joop Haneman. Among other things, he takes part in raids on distribution offices, and becomes the leader of a gang of resistance fighters, the KP Laag-Soeren. The SD - the German Sicherheitsdienst - tracks him down. On 6 November 1943 at 9.30 am, Freek's pregnant wife Jans is arrested by two SD members, the house is turned upside down, books are taken away and her two-year-old son Wim is left crying at the neighbors. Jans is locked up in Arnhem in the house of detention, interrogated fifteen times by Ahlbrecht and held for four long months.

The cell door in the 'Oranjestotel'

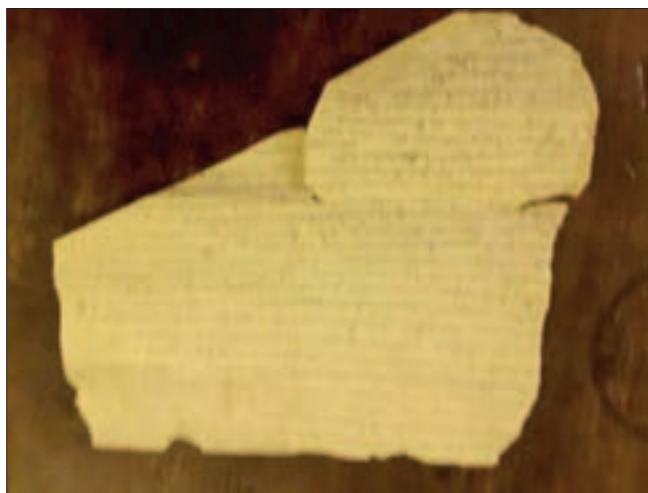


The door of Freek's cell

The cell door of the cell in which Freek stays in the 'Oranjestotel', with the names of Freek's wife and children scratched on it.

On April 4, 1944, Freek is arrested, he is alone on the

train from Utrecht to Amsterdam. An escape attempt fails. He is locked up in the police headquarters in Amsterdam and prisons in Scheveningen ('Oranjehotel') and Arnhem. This is followed by transport to camp Vught. From Vught he can maintain contact with his family with the help of some illegally smuggled notes (rags of paper and cake wrappers). For example, he hears from his father about the birth of his second son named after him (Freek jr. / later he is called Freddy) [665].



Torn pieces of paper



Death row in the bunker in camp Vught

Freek writes to his family that, after several interrogations, he has now been imprisoned in a death row in the bunker of the prison in camp Vught. The worst is to be feared. On 5 September 1944, the day on which hundreds of prisoners were transported from camp Vught to the Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück concentration camps, Freek died in front of the firing squad in Vught. The day of his 26th birthday. It was not until many months after his death – in October 1945 – that the family became certain of his fate.

In Vught, the monument erected in 1947 lists the names of 329 executed prisoners. Under the place name of Dieren it says, Somsen Frederik H. 5.9.18-5.9.1944.

In Aalten, Freek's birthplace, his name is on the memorial that stands next to Saint Helena Church on the Marketplace in Aalten. At the unveiling of this memorial, the following words were spoken:

"May this monument permanently remind us and our posterity of the call to resist foreign domination and tyranny."



Memorial Stone Aalten

The Jewish Van Gelder family

In April 1943, the Jewish family of Israel van Gelder, from Bergstraat 57 in Doesburg, was told that all Jews still present in Doesburg would be transferred to Vught. Israel van Gelder, his wife Marianne van Gelder van Velden and their newborn son Jaap are taken to separate hiding places with the help of Freek.

Marianne and her son Jaap are, after Van Gelder has gone into hiding, taken off the bus by Freek on the line Doesburg – Dieren. Freek temporarily hides them in a hiding place in the "Onzalige" Forests south of Dieren. They eventually end up in Utrecht.

Freek consciously chooses a wandering existence in the resistance, in order to lead the occupier astray. Through this method, Freek can also take the best care of 'his' Jewish people.

Efforts remembrance spot in Doesburg

In 1945, Israel van Gelder - back in their home Bergstraat 57 in Doesburg - submitted a request to the municipality of Doesburg to name a street after Frederik Hendrik Somsen. It is To Freek's credit that his family survived the Holocaust after two years in hiding.

The following request comes from the Jewish Mr. Lo Cohen (former council member of Doesburg and still active in Doesburg society). Together with Jaap van Gelder, the son of the Van Gelder family in hiding, Cohen submitted a request to the municipality in the 1990s.



Lo Cohen

Many years later, Mrs. Wil Verlaan, former chairwoman of the Doesburg Committee 4 and 5 May submitted another request to the Mayor and Aldermen of Doesburg.

Unfortunately, according to Henk IJbema of Het Huis Doesburg, all three proposals were not honored due to "too little historical awareness". After his retirement in 2012, he immersed himself in the events of the Second World War in and around Doesburg.



Henk IJbema

Remembrance Day 4 May

During the annual walk along the Doesburg war monuments, the plaque on the outer wall of the Town Hall by the 4 and 5 May Committee Doesburg will each time extensively reflect on Frederik Hendrik Somsen, because his name is missing on a Doesburg monument. That is still felt as an omission. IJbema is present at the walk of 4 May 2019, and he wants an answer to this historical error.

Celebrating 75 years of Freedom seems to him a fitting moment to submit another request to the municipality of Doesburg. Following on the three previous initiatives, IJbema conducted further research to create a lasting place of remembrance for Freek in Doesburg. He does this in consultation with Godelieve van der Heijden and Wil Verlaan, both ladies joined Het Huis Doesburg in 2019.

Together with Marcel Somsen [681], nephew of Freek, son of Leendert Hendrik [55] and granddaughter Mariska Somsen [694], daughter of Wim, the first son of Freek [663], they start searching for traces that Freek has left behind.

As in the introduction "What is known about Frederik Hendrik Somsen?", for the first three requests, apart from the historical awareness at the municipality, there were probably too few leads and traces found to achieve the desired result! Freek also assumed that what someone else does not know cannot be betrayed. At the time from his reasoning a safe thought, after all he certainly endangered his family, parents, brothers and sisters and other close relatives through his acts of resistance. Fortunately, that went well.



*Derk Jan Somsen and Aleida G. Somsen-Stronks
with the photo of Freek on the mantelpiece*

However, it has become clear from research that a number of Jewish families survived the war because of Freek, including the Van Gelder family. The Van Gelder

family has had a photo of Freek on the mantelpiece for years as a reminder and thanks to his efforts, which he had to pay for with death. This photo has also been on the mantelpiece at his parents' home as a reminder of Freek.

Freek Somsenpath

In 2019, the three representatives of Het Huis Doesburg succeeded in giving Freek that place of remembrance in Doesburg, which Freek has deserved for more than 75 years. On 3 September 2019, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of Doesburg, following a positive internal recommendation, approved their proposal. The walking path next to Freek's parental home is named after him.

On 26 January 2020 it was eighty years ago that Freek Somsen married Johanna Wilhelmina Beek (Jans). IJbema, in consultation with the "Doesburg Somsenbranch", finds their wedding day a suitable date for unveiling of the nameplate.

The Red Cross



Freek and his resistance cross.

Freek's personal belongings were returned to Freek's parents at the end of 1945 and in the course of 1946, through the intervention of the Red Cross. His son Wim [663] kept this family property after the death of his grandparents. Unfortunately Wim Somsen has passed away, his wife Els is present at the unveiling and thinks it is a pity that Wim is not allowed to experience this moment: "How proud he must have been, he has always talked about it", Els says with sadness in her voice. Their daughter Mariska has taken over the "custody task" from her father, and "guards" the family property: 'It will never leave the house is her motto!'

City story Doesburg Freek Somsen



Gasthuiskerk

On Sunday 1 September 2019, the first City Narrative of Het Huis Doesburg about the Second World War will take place in Doesburg. All nine City Narratives are dedicated to 75 years of Freedom and are held in Gasthuiskerk in the City of Doesburg. In this City Narrative "Honor to a man of resistance," Wil Verlaan and Godelieve van de Heijden report on the recent research results of Het Huis Doesburg about Freek Somsen.

At this City Narrative there are of course many Somsens present. But whether chance wanted it that way! Marcel Somsen has organized a family reunion of the "Somsens" in Doesburg on this Sunday, not being aware of the date of this City Narrative! Who may have arranged that, a real coincidence! this will forever remain an unanswered question!



Will Verlaan

Dick Somsen [130] and Harry Somsen [146] members of the Somsen foundation are also present at this City Narrative, which has been digitally recorded by LiVi Pro Media productions on film and by both of us.

The unveiling



Marcel Somsen [681]



*Henk IJbema & Birgit van Veldhuizen
(deputy mayor)*

On Friday 24 January 2020, family members and guests will be present in 'Het Arsenal 1309' in Doesburg in the afternoon in, by invitation of the municipality of Doesburg. Henk IJbema warmly welcomes the guests on behalf of 'Het Huis Doesburg'. Birgit van Veldhuizen (deputy mayor) welcomes the guests, in particular the Somsen family,

on this historic day. On behalf of the City of Doesburg, she is delighted that the name of their family member and resistance fighter Freek Somsen will be permanently linked to the City of Doesburg today.

IJbema gives a look back at Freek's life, in particular his resistance period in WWII. Then he gives the floor to Marcel Somsen [681] to tell a piece of family history, with the underlying question from IJbema: "What the death of Freek has meant, for his parents, brothers and sisters and other family members, and still means?"



The unveiling

After these speeches, IJbema invites the guests to go to Freek's nameplate for the unveiling. Over the nameplate hangs the flag of the City of Doesburg. IJbema first reads a shortened version of the poem by Gree, the sister of Freek. He then asks deputy mayor Birgit van Veldhuizen to unveil the nameplate together with Mariska Somsen [694] and Jaap van Gelder (77 years old).

Parental home Freek

After the unveiling we walked – everyone with his / her own thoughts - on the Freek Somsenpath to the parental home of Freek. Out of respect, we spent a few moments thinking about the house built in 1936.



Mariska Banda-Somsen & Jaap van Gelder



Street sign at Schout bij Nacht Doormansingel



Interested parties at the unveiling



Schout bij Nacht Doormansingel 5 in 2020



Freek Somsenpath with busstop

In October 2007 Gree van Daatselaar – Somsen, at the request of young family members, writes down her memories about the war years. The young guard does not want to know the big world events, but the years 1940 – 1945. What happened in these five years in and around our 'Somsenhuis' in Doesburg? This valuable document is kept in the family archive.

Ijbema tells on the spot that in April 1945 the family of Derk Jan Somsen was on the opposite side in the air raid shelters, under his own Wire Braiding and Metalware Factory and in the cellars of the adjacent building of DOTEX (Doesburg Textile Industry), and Laundry IJsselstroom, of Jo Janssen, an employee.



Somsen family in the air raid shelter



Chatting in the Arsenal



The Germans briefly had a sausage factory in the cellars of the factory building, see the attached scan from the diary of father Derk Jan Somsen. Then we walked back to 'Het Arsenaal 1309', where we sat together, to reminisce and let the impressions of this afternoon settle and take them home.

It is tangible that it is an impressive afternoon for all those present and that we as Somsens – are proud that our Freek is "Home" again because of this naming of a hiking trail in Doesburg with his name, after more than 75 years.

Thanks

Dick Somsen [130] and Harry Somsen [146] have thanked Henk IJbema, Wil Verlaan and Godelieve van der Heijden of Het Huis Doesburg on behalf of the Somsen Foundation for their efforts and research to give their family member Frederik Hendrik Somsen [47] a place of remembrance in Doesburg. The unnamed walking path next to the parental home is a fitting place to connect his name forever.

Doesburg, 1 February 2020

Text Henk IJbema, edited by Harry Somsen

Bronnen: SOMSEN Omnes Generaciones.
Zelhem: Harry Somsen [146]
Doesburg: Henk IJbema; Researcher Het Huis Doesburg, WW2 Doesburg and surroundings.

The German Sausage Factory

Located in the basement of the Wire Braiding and Metalware Factory of Derk Jan Somsen, formerly Ooipoortwal 6, now Schout bij Nacht Doormansingel 16 opposite the house of the Somsens at no. 5.

Source: Diary Derk Jan Somsen, period 1 to 18 April 1945.

April 2. The Germans left the old factory of ours - that is what I will call them. They had turned it into a sausage factory and they had the business in operation for more than eight days. To complete the case, they also had a smoke oven bricked against the back wall. Even a double one. As if they think they will stay here forever. During the business there we were hoping for a few sausages, but the gentlemen were not very generous about that. I think they sometimes exchanged something for Dutch gin, because we noticed that they sometimes had a good drink. And when they were gone, the empty gin bottles in the office were on the table. Before they finally left, we were allowed to get some bones and marrow pipes, which we used of course. We had so much that we could also give something to others.

America is one big Dutch symphony

Zaandam organs in 102 American churches and concert halls

JUST WALK into a decent-sized American church, say: Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago, or Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland, or go to Carnegie Hall in New York, Yale in New Haven or Harvard near Boston, or on the left coast, the St James Episcopal Cathedral in Fresno, California. In each building there's an organ made by Flentrop from Zaandam. In 102 American churches and concert halls, the music comes from a Flentrop organ.

Dutch organ making in America started when young Dirk Flentrop built the organ for the 1939 World Exhibition in New York. The expo attracted 44 million visitors, and soon churches and concert halls across America began asking for Dutch organs. Flentrop was the son of an organ builder, but the inspiration for success came from Albert Schweitzer, himself an organist in Strasbourg. He said Dirk could be a good one. This turned out to be true. In America alone, it earned him two honorary doctorates.

IT IS ONE of those countless Dutch fingerprints in everyday America, just like the 23 states that have a Dutch windmill somewhere. Everything that the Dutch excelled at back when they were the first to build America four hundred years ago, it's still here today, as if a time machine spit it forward four centuries.

The Dutch were the world's first serious dam builders, something that Holland America Line continues to promote by naming its cruise ships after it: Zuiderdam, Maasdam, Veendam, Westerdam, Koningsdam, etc.,



The Zaandam made Flentrop organ in the Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago

eleven in total, together good for carrying 28,000 passengers. The HAL started out as a regular passenger carrier, with scheduled services. The first ship was named Rotterdam, and soon half a million people were transported to New York. Cruise sailing came later and when it did, it was an immediate success. The shipping company decided to make its home base -dam a permanent and recognizable part of the fleet, realizing that the Netherlands thanks its existence to building dams, a skill that started a thousand years ago.

Sure enough, Dutch dike builders are working today in New York, Houston, New Orleans, Miami, San Francisco, Seattle, Norfolk, Charleston, and elsewhere to drastically raise the seawall before it's too late. Road construction and farming: John Deere aside, the two largest suppliers of all that the builder and the farmer could possibly need are Vermeer in Iowa and New Holland in Pennsylvania.

THE ART OF storytelling that back in those Golden Age years was still expressed by master painters on the canvas, now it's done on the silver screen: Angelina from Lekkerkerk, Julia from Breda, Audrey from Velp, Clint from Stevensweert, Clooney from Vianen, De Niro from Schoorl, Fonda from Kollum, Jane Seymour from Deventer and Philip Seymour Hoffman from Amsterdam, Steve Buscemi from Schouwen Duiveland, Cherize Theron from Walcheren - the tiny tip of a giant Dutch iceberg in Hollywood.

I am sometimes asked whether, after more than three decades here, I miss Holland. Answer: if I wanted, I couldn't. It is all around me: the paper mill on the river down the road, now in Chinese hands, recently sold to them by the grandsons of Hotze Koch from Workum. Up the river, another one, this one built by Amsterdam's Gerrit Schenck. The little free library in the front yard across the street, the idea created by Todd Bol, a Ferdinand Bol descendant. The Hannaford supermarket, owned by Albert Heijn. Bakery LaBree on the way to the airport, descendants of the Labri family from Vianen. And the airport itself is DeWitt Field, after the De Witts from Dordrecht.

Meanwhile, in the living room, Alexa, using Amazon's cloud that is the masterpiece of Werner Vogel from Ermelo, is playing a Bach organ concerto. On a Flentrop organ. Carnegie Hall in New York.

IN MEMORIAM DICK SOMSEN (1929-2022)

Derk Jan (Dick) Somsen passed away on October 13, 2022, after a marriage of 66 years with his beloved

Dicky Somsen-Lenselink (see their photo on page. 209 of our family book).



Without Dick, the Somsen Foundation, which has existed for 25 years now, would never have existed. Like so many Somsens, he was always interested in his immediate family and had a lot of data about that family branch. But he also realized that there were other Somsens as well. He even did business with one of them: Dirk Johan (Dirk) Somsen (1905-1988) from Eibergen. They were undoubtedly family, but how?

Dick attended the funeral service of Dirk Somsen in 1988, because they knew each other businesslike. A full cousin of the deceased Dirk also attended that service: Theo Somsen (1945), who shared the same family interest and also had the data of his family branch. The result can be guessed: Dick and Theo came into contact with each other and they decided to try to link both their family branches together. With success, but a success that tasted like more, so that they set themselves to make a genealogy of all Somsens, anywhere in the world.

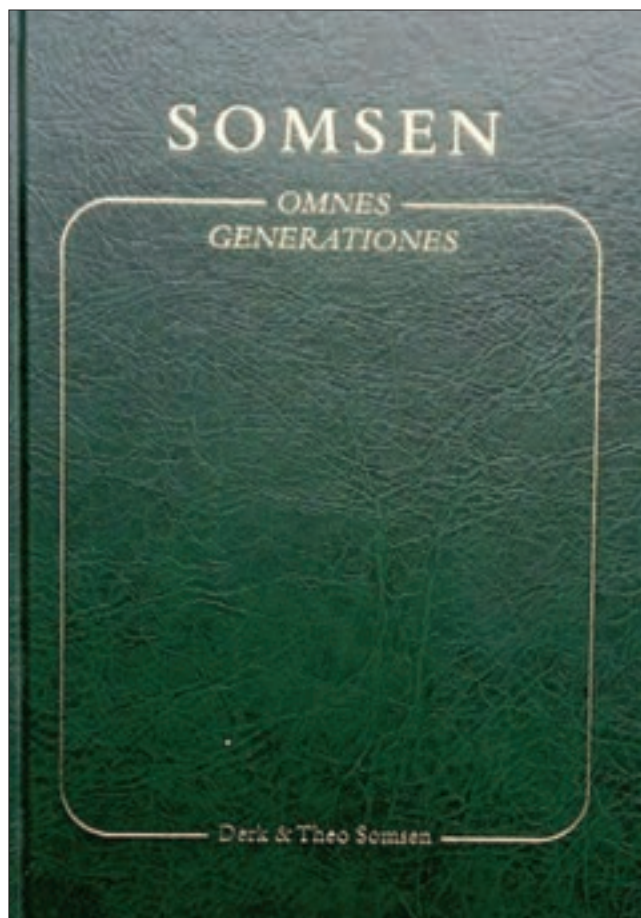


Dick focused his search mainly on the Netherlands and Theo mainly on the rest of the world, with the USA as his main focus. Because many Somsens still lived in the Achterhoek (the birthplace of the Somsens), Dick was often present there in person to collect data. For

example, he visited many Somsen relatives and even got the nickname 'The Somsen Hunter' from them!

After years, all the pieces of the Somsen puzzle had been collected and laid and countless fascinating family stories had been obtained, making it inevitable to make all this accessible in a book.

Of course, Dick and Theo's activities did not go unnoticed, on the contrary. Many family members became enthusiastic about it and felt that the publication of the family book should be accompanied by organizing a Worldwide Somsen Reunion!



And that happened in August 1997. What a party that was: with more than four hundred Somsens and Somsen descendants from many countries! How many times did we hear participants sigh: 'Oh, how much my parents would have liked to have experienced this!' No wonder that the family book Somsen Omnes Generations (Somsen, all generations) was sold out instantly.

Dick Somsen remained involved in and active in and for the Foundation: as an advisor to the board and as a genealogist. He meticulously processed all reported births, marriages and deaths, which he mentioned in every edition of Somsen Horizon or Newsletter. Every year he participated with Dicky and their caravan in the annual Camping Weekends and of course in the five-yearly Somsen Reunions.

From the first Reunion in 1997, many still remember his organ playing during the Memorial Meeting in the Saint Helena Church of Aalten on Sunday, August 10, 1997.

In addition to his passion for organ playing (for years in church services), Dick had a passion for sailing. Sailing, also in competitions together with his son Dirk. You wonder where he the time and the energy came from...

As one of the few Somsens, Dick and his Dicky also visited those in America (Baldwin 2002 and New Ulm 2012)!

Dicky, their (grand)children and friends will miss him, of course. We sympathize with them and are grateful for our cooperation with Dick and for his merit for the worldwide Somsen family (incl. descendants). The statutes of our Foundation do not have the possibility to appoint honorary members, but if that possibility exists then Dick would be at the top of our list. **By far the most important!**

Dutch touch

by Theo Somsen [227]

Anyone who wants to know how big the influence of the Dutch emigrants was and is on the United States can read just about everything about it in the book written with humor by Willem Meiners. The title is 'The Dutch Touch' and the subtitle 'How a small country conquered America'.

We sometimes think that Dutch influence in America ceased when New Amsterdam became New York in 1664. But that is a mistake, because 'Holland' has always remained there and is still present everywhere: in American kitchens and bathrooms. In supermarkets, restaurants and petrol stations. On the road, on TV, in the computer. Americans are buying en masse Dutch soap, jeans, tea, chocolate, creams, ice creams. Starbucks comes from Alkmaar, bungalows come from Den Helder, the roundabouts in four hundred American cities from Drachten. And Endemol's "The Voice" is the most-watched TV show. Moreover, Clint Eastwood is of Dutch descent, just like Meryl Streep, Georg Clooney and Angelina Jolie. Marlon Brando comes from Utrecht, Elvis Presley from Spakenburg and Robert de Niro from School. Mark Twain, Jane Fonda, Kim Kardashian? Dutch origin! Just like Thomas Edison, Alexander Bell, Henry Ford, the Rockefellers and eight American presidents... Meanwhile, the Americans in New York, Houston, New Orleans, Miami and San Francisco know exactly where the Netherlands are situated. The sea level is rising, the coastal cities are getting nervous and 'the Dutch' know everything about dams, dikes and keeping dry feet. America discovers the Netherlands!

Willem Meiners was born in Amsterdam. Since 1991 he has been working in America, where he lives with his American wife Alice in Bangor (Maine). His book 'The Dutch Touch' was published in 2019 by Balans Publishers in Amsterdam as a paperback, 240 pages. As an eBook it costs € 9.99. But as a book it is only available second-hand at www.boekwinkeltjes.nl and on marktplaats.nl. No English translation of the book has been published so far. It is certainly a book that you will enjoy a lot and that is also a great gift for anyone who is interested in our part in the development of America.



Onthulling plaqueette



It is memorable that he was allowed to unveil the plaque during the 3rd Reunion in IJzerlo (Aalten) at the Somsenhuis in IJzerlo, which lets us know that the first Somsen with that name lived here!

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: somseogenealogie@kpnplanet.nl or via regular mail to: D. Somsen, Verduinsbos 10, 4661 NW Halsteren.

Please visit our website and check whether the mention of your family is correct and whether the passport photo of yourself, your parents and/or your children needs renewal. Please send me your response and I will gladly help you with your update work.

Born: No entries

Married: No entries

Deceased:

3-11-2021: Hermina Johanna (Hermien) Somsen-Luiten [993], 82, Aalten

30-7-2022: Hendrik Gerrit (Henk) Somsen [1882], 73, Eibergen

18-8-2022: Judith Ann (Judy) Zavracky-Somsen [2354], 78, Sharon [ma,usa]

13-10-2022: Derk Jan (Dick) Somsen [130], 93, Zwolle

11-11-2022: Pieter (Piet) Rodenburg [390], 89, Utrecht



*Hermina
Johanna*



*Judith
Ann*



Derk Jan



Pieter

A special marriage and ditto advertisement

by Theo Somsen [227]

It has happened that a Somsen married a Somsen (see Somsen Omnes Generationes, p. 55). In 1950, for example, 85-year-old Arend Jan Somsen [18] married the then 60-year-old Hendrika Johanna Somsen [78].

Both Arend and Hendrika had not been married before, so it was probably a marriage of convenience. It is also striking that Arend married the daughter of his brother Hendrik Jan [17]. Hendrika never knew his father, however, because he died a month before her birth in 1891. Arend Jan was born in Aalten in 1864 and settled as a blacksmith in Hillegom (in the province of South Holland). Yet he did not forget his native region, because on February 25, 1899, he placed the following advertisement in 'De Graafschapper'. That newspaper appeared throughout the Achterhoek.

That newspaper appeared throughout the Achterhoek.

In this advertisement he offers a pulpit (very special and moreover as good as new!) and he looks for a sturdy Blacksmith's servant. Apparently, he prefers someone from his native region: a real Achterhoeker.

PREEKSTOEL
te koop aangeboden, wegens
 verbouwing, zoo goed als nieuw, geheel
 compleet, met klankbord, voeting en trap,
 tegen spotprijs. Te bevragen bij A. J.
 SOMSEN, Gedipl. Hoefsmid, *Hillegom*,
 waar tevens een flinke **Smidsknecht**
 geplaatst kan worden.



The board of the Somsen Foundation wishes you a prosperous and healthy 2023 !