

**The Eising Family**  
**From Drenthe to Southern Ontario**  
**1895 – 1978**



*The Eising Family in the orchard at De Breedendam, circa 1940*  
*Back L-R: Jan, Aaltje, Willem, Jannes, Trijntje*  
*Front L-R: Hendrik Sr., Hendrik Jr., Hendrikien*

## Table of Contents

In the Beginning .....	1
The War Years .....	10
After the War .....	22
Immigration .....	27
Getting Established.....	47
The Twilight Years.....	59
Postscript.....	71
Appendix 1: Family Tree.....	72
Appendix 2: Grandchildren & Great Grandchildren .....	73
Appendix 3: Maps.....	74
Appendix 4: Timeline .....	77
Appendix 5: <i>De Breedendam</i> Fire.....	83

Researched & compiled by **Sandy Eising Brunsting**

March 2025

Many thanks for all the help from:

- *Jane Eising Weverink for getting the story started with an email to us cousins in September 2024 with her dad's wartime memories,*
- *Nelda Eising Renkema, with information gathered from her family including Henry & Maria Eising, the memoir of her mother Jansje Mulder Eising, and her son, Justin Renkema, who had gathered stories from her father, Jannes Eising,*
- *Henny Nykamp Uyl, for so many pictures and old postcards,*
- *Leo Vis, for his pictures and family documents,*
- *Margaret Eising Barnard, for filling in so many details from Willem Eising's family,*
- *Henry Eising, my dear dad, for still being here, the last surviving sibling from his family, and for giving me lots of memories & details,*
- *and Theo Brunsting for his love, encouragement and his invaluable genealogy data base.*

## In the Beginning

It was a memorable day in the Eising family: little Hendrik was born. It was 27 June 1895 in the small village of Meppen in the northern province of Drenthe in the Netherlands. He was the youngest of five surviving children. There had been a previous Hendrik who had lived only two short years and now there was a new little boy to take the name.

Hendrik was probably birthed by a midwife at the family home. It was a typical farmhouse with living quarters for the family and an attached barn for their animals. The front of the house was right beside the dirt road with fields behind the house stretching across the flat lands, punctuated by drainage ditches.

Meppen was a small village, being home to only 238 people in 1840 and by 1895, it was probably much the same size. It was an ancient place, though. There is some evidence of settlement there dating back to 5,000 BC<sup>1</sup>.

People generally stayed close to home their whole lives and rarely travelled much farther than the next village which, in this case, was Zweeloo only 3 kilometres away. Zweeloo was the municipality's seat and head of their parish, and the family would have baptized little Hendrik in the church there.

Hendrik's parents were Willem Eising and Aaltje Kremers. When Hendrik was born in 1895, Willem was 42 and Aaltje was 38. His five older siblings were:

- Jantje born in 1880,
- Geesje born in 1882,
- Hendrik born in 1885 and died in 1887,
- Grietje born in 1888,
- Jan born in 1891.

Willem had left his family home at age 13, and it is quite possible that he worked on the Kremers farm in Meppen. Aaltje's father had died the previous year, and the farm may have needed the help of a young farmhand. He later married Aaltje.<sup>2</sup>



*Willem Eising, 1853 – 1936.*

---

<sup>1</sup> From Wikipedia.

<sup>2</sup> As researched by Theo Brunsting.



*The Netherlands and its provinces.*



*The province of Drenthe in the northern part of the Netherlands.*

In Drenthe, in those days, it was customary for the oldest son to inherit the farm but that would also come with the obligation to care for his parents as they aged. Other sons, sometimes called ‘free sons’, were released from these family obligations and could make their own way in the world.<sup>3</sup> Hopefully, the daughters would marry well. But sometimes things didn’t turn out quite that way.

Willem and Aaltje lived on the Eising farm in Meppen. The farm likely came to Willem through Aaltje, as she was the only surviving sibling. Her older sister never married and died about four years after Willem and Aaltje were married. Although Willem was the oldest son in his family, it seems that his father was either a farm labourer or he rented land so there would have been no farm to inherit. So, it appears that Willem got the farm along with the farmer’s daughter! He married well.



*The house (left) on the Eising family farm on Mepperstraat in Meppen, circa 1960. The house is now a B&B.*

Willem was the only one of his siblings to marry and have children. There was a lot of tuberculosis in the family<sup>4</sup> and several of his siblings died young.

Unfortunately, Aaltje also died in 1908 when Hendrik was only 12. He became very close to an older sister who took care of him after that. The one thing she knew how to cook was *pannenkoeken* and they ate them often. For years afterwards, Hendrik avoided eating pancakes because he had had his fill.<sup>5</sup>

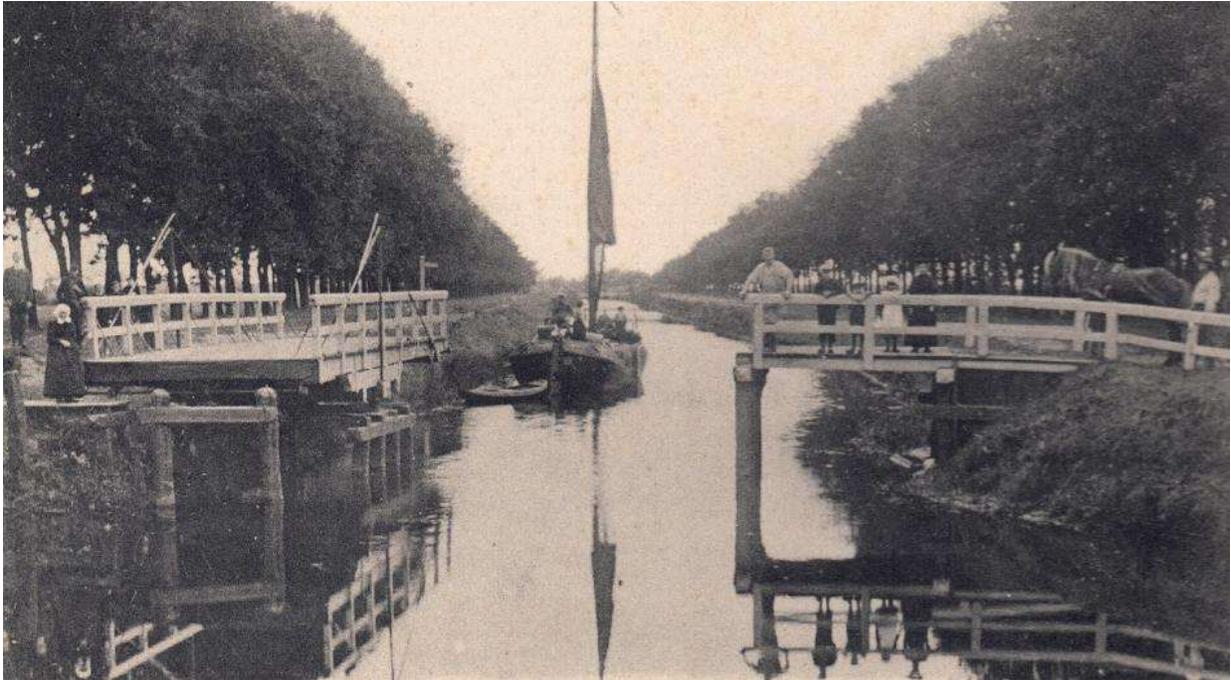
---

<sup>3</sup> As researched by Theo Brunsting

<sup>4</sup> As related by Hendrik’s daughter, Trijntje, in a conversation 20 Sept 2016.

<sup>5</sup> As related by Hendrik’s son, Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2025.

About 34 kilometres distant from Meppen was the village of Smilde. It was first developed around 1770 as a canal village where peat was excavated. A prominent Dutch Reformed Church was built there in the 1780's. In 1840 it had 1675 residents<sup>6</sup>.



*The Oranje-kanaal near Smilde.*

In nearby Bovensmilde, along the canal, on 24 June 1895, three days earlier than Hendrik's birth, the family Boxen had a little girl named Hendriken. She had an older sister who had been stillborn and there were no other children born to that family, so she was an only child.

Hendriken's parent were Jannes Boxen and Trijntje Vos. Jannes was 34 and Trijntje 28 years old when she was born. They were a well-to-do farm family with hired help for the farm and servants in the house. Their financial ease, however, could not spare them from grief and Trijntje died at age 37, in 1904, when Hendriken was only 9 years old.

---

<sup>6</sup> From Wikipedia.



*Trijntje Vos, 1867 – 1904.*



*Hendriken Boxen, circa 1910.*

Jannes remarried five years later in 1909 when Hendriken was 14. Her new stepmother was Albertien Hoving, and she also gained a 9-year-old stepbrother, Harm Brouwer. The following year, Jannes and Albertien had a baby boy, Arend Boxen, so now Hendriken had a half-brother, too.

So, there was a prosperous farm in Smilde needing farm hands, and Hendrik in need of employment because his older brother, Jan, had inherited the Eising family farm. Hendrik had tried working with his brother on the farm, but that did not go well. So, Hendrik went to work on the Boxen farm in Smilde. There he met young Hendriken, a lovely gentle girl, and took a liking to her. He was courting another young woman at the time but once he saw Hendriken, he had eyes only for her.<sup>7</sup> It seems his feelings were reciprocated, and he approached Jannes Boxen to ask for her hand in marriage. Jannes refused him and told Hendrik that he was not worthy of his daughter because he would only ever be a farm hand. Though disappointed, Hendrik eventually got up the courage to ask again. And once again, he was rejected.

This is one version of the family story of how Hendrik and Hendriken met.<sup>8</sup> As with all distant memories, there might be some room for interpretation. There is some question of how long Hendrik may have worked on the Boxen farm, as his youngest son has no recollection of hearing that his father had worked on his mother's farm. He also had the impression that his Opa Boxen and his father Hendrik got along just fine. And during those same years, Europe was embroiled in World War I, and Hendrik served in the military in the 'dog artillery' where large dogs were used to haul light pieces of

---

<sup>7</sup> As related by Hendrik's daughter, Trijntje, in a conversation 20 Sept 2016.

<sup>8</sup> As related by Hendrik's son, Jan, in a story for his grandson.

artillery. Because the Netherlands was neutral in the war, Hendrik didn't see any active duty, but he did serve in its military.

But meanwhile, Hendriken was getting older with no other prospects in sight. She was almost 25 and headed for life as a spinster. Perhaps Hendriken had her eye on Hendrik and no one else measured up. So, when Hendrik asked her father a third time, he relented. Hendrik and Hendriken were married on 30 April 1920 in Smilde.



*Hendrik served in the military, circa 1917.*



*Hendrik & Hendriken's engagement, circa 1920.*

There had also been the question of inheriting the family farm. Since Hendriken was the only child of her father's first marriage, custom dictated that she should inherit the farm, and certainly Hendriken herself thought she should have received it. However, her father had remarried and there was a stepson as well as a son from the second marriage, so her father decided to forego tradition and give the farm to his stepson, Harm Brouwer. It is possible that his second wife, Albertien, exerted her influence in this matter. Hendriken felt betrayed and bitter; she seemed unable to let it go and mentioned it to family members over the years.

There also seems to have been some expectation that Hendrikien might marry her stepbrother to keep the farm in the family, but while she liked her stepbrother well enough, she did not want to marry him just to keep the land in the family.<sup>9</sup>

So, Hendrik and Hendrikien were wed and needed to make their own living. Hendrik was enterprising and hard-working, if not always financially successful in his various ventures. Because of this, the family moved around a fair bit. They started in Odoornerveen, only a few kilometers from Meppen, where it is likely that Hendrik was a farmhand. The oldest two children were born there:

- Willem born in 1921,
- Jannes born 1922.

The family then moved to Meppen where Hendrik operated a chicken hatchery business. They bought land there and Hendrikien's father built them a house and a barn.<sup>10</sup> The next three children were born there.

- Aaltje born in 1926,
- Jan born in 1928,
- Trijntje born in 1930.



*Hendrikien (left), Aaltje (middle), circa 1925.*

---

<sup>9</sup> As related by Trijntje, in a conversation, 20 Sept 2016.

<sup>10</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.



*L-R: Jannes, Jan, Aaltje, circa 1931.*

A lot of the chicks from the hatchery were shipped into Germany, and with the Great Depression starting, and the German currency being almost worthless following the reparations of the Great War, Hendrik had to close the hatchery.<sup>11</sup> They couldn't make a go of it financially.

In 1934, the family moved to a farm in Hoogeveen; it is believed that the farm was purchased and not rented.<sup>12</sup> Their last child was born there.

- Hendrik Jr. born in 1936.

---

<sup>11</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>12</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda, 2024.



*L - R: Aaltje, Hendrikien, Trijntje, Jan, circa 1931.*



*Aaltje, circa 1936*



*Hendrik Jr. circa 1944.*

The boys were an active bunch and helped with the farming chores as well as getting into mischief. There are stories about the older boys playing pranks while delivering eggs from the hatchery (the details being lost to history). There is also a story about Willem tossing a stick into the spokes of the mayor's bicycle sending him and his briefcase flying, which his brother Jannes saw but never reported.<sup>13</sup> Jan once persuaded little Hendrik to poke Hendrik Sr. in the bum with a long needle. Poor little Hendrik was in trouble until Hendrik Sr. saw Jan laughing – then Jan was in trouble.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.



*Hendrik Jr., circa 1940.*

## **The War Years**

In October 1938, Hendrik Sr. tried his luck with a farm in Beusichem,<sup>15</sup> in the Betuwe, a fruit-growing area. Beusichem started as a settlement near the Lek River and was first mentioned in historical records in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. By 1840, it had about 1,000 residents.<sup>16</sup> It was known historically for a famous horse market held there every summer. Horse keepers from Russia, France, Germany and Switzerland came to Beusichem to trade horses, and it is said that even Napoleon had bought horses there.<sup>17</sup> The horse market, the *Paardenmarkt*, was a large open area about the size of a city block, bounded by houses on two sides, the historic Dutch Reformed Church with a 12<sup>th</sup> century tower on one side and municipal buildings on the other. It was a smooth paved area with a street running diagonally across it. It was a short walk from the farm which Hendrik Sr. rented. Hendrik Jr. went up the church tower many times as he had a friend who had to ring the bell every morning at 11:00 a.m.

---

<sup>15</sup> Culemborgsche Courant, 1938-11-12, p 2.

<sup>16</sup> From Wikipedia.

<sup>17</sup> From Wikipedia.



*The province of Gelderland in the central part of the Netherlands.*



*De Breedendam as it may have looked during the war years.*

The Eising family stayed for eight years in Beusichem at the farm called 'De Breedendam' on Beneden Molenweg; they spent the war years there and stayed until 1946. Hendrik Sr. worked the land in a rent-to-own agreement with the landowner. It had a large estate house, and the landlord lived in half of it. The Eising family lived on the bottom floor of the other half and in the living area of the back building which also had access to the barn. The older children slept in a large room on the bottom floor of the main house where they each had a *bedstee*, an enclosed sleeping closet. The parents and young Hendrik slept on the main floor of the back house where they also had their kitchen. In the last weeks or possibly months of the war, a German General used the front part of the landlord's half of the house.

The family's religious and social life centred around church, the Gereformeerde Kerk. Hendrik Sr. was elected as a deacon in 1940, an office he held until 1945.<sup>18</sup>

The farm had two sections of land, one backing onto the *dijk* on *De Lek*, and the other by the house. It had orchards with mostly cherry trees, a fenced off area of about an acre to produce rabbits which Jan took care of, and an assortment of farm animals including a small herd of milk cows. The cows were milked in the barn by the house but pastured by *De Lek*, so they walked them back and forth daily. They had moved the hatchery equipment with them, so they also produced chicks.<sup>19</sup> During their first growing season, in 1939, Hendrik tried to sell his crop of cherries by advertising in the local newspaper.<sup>20</sup>



*Hendrik Sr. (back) with Hendrik Jr. (front) and friend (middle) at De Breedendam, circa 1940.*

---

<sup>18</sup> Culemborgsche Courant, 1940-11-30, p 2, & Culemborgsche Courant, 1945-11-14, p 1.

<sup>19</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Nieuwe Tielsche Courant, 1939,06-02, p 2.



*Hendrik Jr. with rabbits at De Breedendam, circa 1941*



*Jannes' certificate from the Fruittelsschool Te Geldermalsen, 1945.*

Jannes took a keen interest in the orchards and in 1940, both he and Willem got a certificate in fruit growing, 'Tuinbouwcursus' in Tiel.<sup>21</sup> Then in 1945, he obtained a certificate for fruit farming from the 'Fruittelsschool Te Geldermalsen.

<sup>21</sup> Culemborgsche Courant 1940-03-23, p 2.



Classified ad for the sale of a young fat cow, January 1940.

In 1939, Germany started World War II with the invasion of Poland. The Netherlands declared neutrality as they had in World War I, but they also mobilized their military. In May 1940, German troops invaded and occupied The Netherlands. Queen Wilhelmina and the Dutch government relocated to London and directed the Dutch war effort from there, including *underground* operations.

Princess Juliana and her family found refuge in Ottawa for the duration of the war. When her third child was born, the Canadian government declared the maternity ward of the hospital to be extraterritorial, which meant that she could be born a Dutch citizen and be eligible to succeed to the throne. The Dutch royal family has continued to send thousands of tulip bulbs to Canada annually as a gift of thanks for all the Canadians did for the Netherlands during the war.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, the Netherlands was governed by the *NSB* party. It had started as a Dutch fascist movement in the 1930's and eventually became a political party. Under Nazi occupation, it became the only legal political party and openly collaborated with the Nazis becoming Germany's puppet government in the Netherlands. Its members were sympathetic to Nazi ideals and were despised by patriotic Dutchmen. All the country's leaders, at all levels of government, were required to belong to the *NSB* party. After the war, many of its members were arrested, but only a few were convicted, and many only got a slap on the wrist, although its leader was executed as a war criminal a year after the war ended.<sup>23</sup>

Hendrik Sr., a patriotic man of integrity, became very involved in the *underground*, the Dutch resistance movement. Papers from the *underground* were hidden in the chicken hatchery, and Jews and *onderduikers*, which means 'people in hiding', were occasionally hidden in the loft of the barn. *Onderduikers* were men who were conscripted to work in German factories producing war materials. Many fled and were put on a 'wanted list' by the Nazis; hiding them was perilous. Some hid in the loft of the barn for a time until a suitable place could be found for them.<sup>24</sup>

At various times, there were refugees from other areas of the Netherlands. It is unclear whether they were *onderduikers* or hungry city people, but there is a story about refugees from the province of Brabant hiding there. The people they hid, whether refugees, *onderduikers*, or Jews, did not starve because Hendrik Sr. was supplied with food coupons through his connections with the *underground*. These were distributed along with illegal literature.

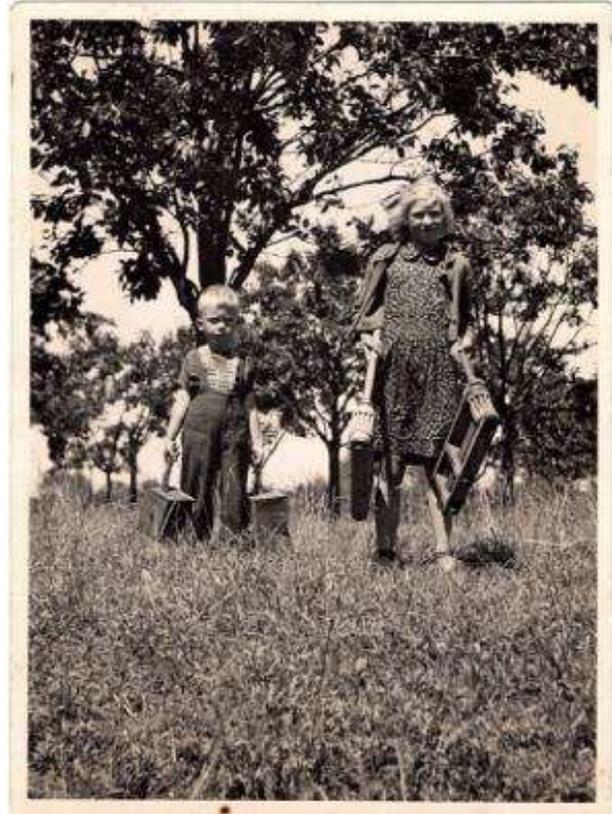
---

<sup>22</sup> From Wikipedia.

<sup>23</sup> From Wikipedia.

<sup>24</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

Jews hiding there only stayed a few nights until they could be moved to the next safe place. Several of these Jews had owned businesses in Culemborg. One Jew, however, stayed with them for a few months. He had changed his name at work so that nobody would suspect he was a Jew. He had come from the city with his Gentile wife when they ran out of food.<sup>25</sup>



*Trijntje with Jewish boy in the orchard, circa 1940.*

It was quite risky for the family during the war. They helped with *underground* operations, and hid Jews and *onderduikers*. In addition, the landlord, who lived in the other half of the house, was thought to be an *NSB'er* sympathetic to Nazi ideals. There is a story that with all the activity at the farm, they were eventually reported to the Germans. However, if they were reported, nothing seemed to come of it.

The family's oldest son Willem is not mentioned in any of the family stories from the war years, and he is seen in only one family photograph taken in 1940 just before the Netherlands was invaded. He was there at least part of the time as he and Hendrik Sr. took part in a checkers tournament in the village in 1942.<sup>26</sup> He was reported as leaving Beusichem for Zoelen, about 12 km away, in 1943,<sup>27</sup> and in 1945, he apparently left for Utrecht,<sup>28</sup> 36 km from home. He saw military service but not until after the war. His youngest brother, Hendrik Jr. does not recall seeing him around the farm. As a strong, young man, he would have been sought after by the Germans, later in the war, to work in their factories. He may have become an *onderduiker* and hid elsewhere to escape the German war machine. It is also possible that he lived and worked away from home.

---

<sup>25</sup> As related by Jan in a story for his grandson.

<sup>26</sup> Culemborgsche Courant, 1942-03-14, p 2.

<sup>27</sup> De Tiesterbander, 1943—04-22, p 3.

<sup>28</sup> Nieuwe Tielsche Courant, 1945-06-16, p 2.



*The Eising Family circa 1940, possibly at their 20<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary; Front L - R: Hendrik Sr., Hendrik Jr., Hendriken; Back L-R: Jan, Aaltje, Willem, Jannes, Trijntje.*

Hendrik Jr. recalls being in the barn one day with his father who was carrying some papers from the *underground*. Looking out the door, his father spotted some German soldiers walking towards them through the orchard. Not having time to hide the papers, he motioned to young Hendrik to take them, stuff them down his pants with his shirt pulled over top and play like nothing was happening. Young Hendrik was playing with a bicycle tire rim that had no spokes, and he rolled it with a stick right past the soldiers while he carried the papers to safety.<sup>29</sup>

Another time, the family had a wagon with rubber tires which was very useful for farm work. This wagon was strictly forbidden for them to own, because items like that were requisitioned by the Germans for their war effort. Somehow the Germans found out about the wagon and soldiers came to the farm to take it. Two of them held pistols to Hendrik Sr.'s head, and threatened to shoot him if he didn't turn over the wagon. He refused as the whole family watched. His daughter, Aaltje, terrified for her father, blurted out that the wagon was being hidden in the neighbouring orchard, and they lost it to the Germans.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>30</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

This wagon had also been used by Hendrik Sr. and the older boys to evacuate patients from the hospital in Tiel to a 'castle' or estate house in Marienwaerd, a safer place farther from the 'front'.<sup>31</sup> Later the Germans flooded the Tiel area.

Hendrik Jr. recalls going to the hospital/castle in Marienwaerd with his parents when his mother needed a medical procedure. They still had milk cows on the farm and the children in the hospital desperately needed nutrition, so they brought along a bottle of milk. The young lad proudly carried a glass jar of milk up the steps and into the hospital. Unfortunately, he stumbled, dropping the jar, which smashed on the stone floor. The nurses cried over the spilt milk.



*Castle' in Marienwaerd, present time.*

The family was quite familiar with the hospital in Tiel. In 1943 or 1944, Jannes was shoveling fertilizer when a huge chunk broke loose and fell on his leg, breaking it. Just as the leg healed, he went for a bicycle ride and fell off, breaking his leg again! This time he was in traction in the hospital with a pin through his leg.<sup>32</sup>

After the war, Hendrik Jr. also had a hospital stay in Tiel. He stepped on an embroidery needle which broke off in his foot. He needed surgery to remove it.<sup>33</sup>

Jan also had some medical difficulties. He had a condition that caused him to have 'episodes' which made the blood rush to his head, and his eyes bulge and turn red. After a few minutes, it would settle down and he would be alright. Once, a group of workers, including Jan, was conscripted by the Germans to work on the dike. As they were hurrying there, Jan had an episode and laid down in a ditch until it passed. When everyone was gone, he tried to return home but encountered another group of soldiers. When they asked where he was going, he said he was sick and needed to go home. The soldiers said that he was sick in the head and that he had to go work on the dike anyway. Jan managed to lag behind the group and hid once again in a ditch. Then he headed for home across the fields.<sup>34</sup> (Hendrik Jr. recalls that years later, after immigration, the doctors in Canada were able to diagnose the condition and alleviate it with a minor surgical procedure.)

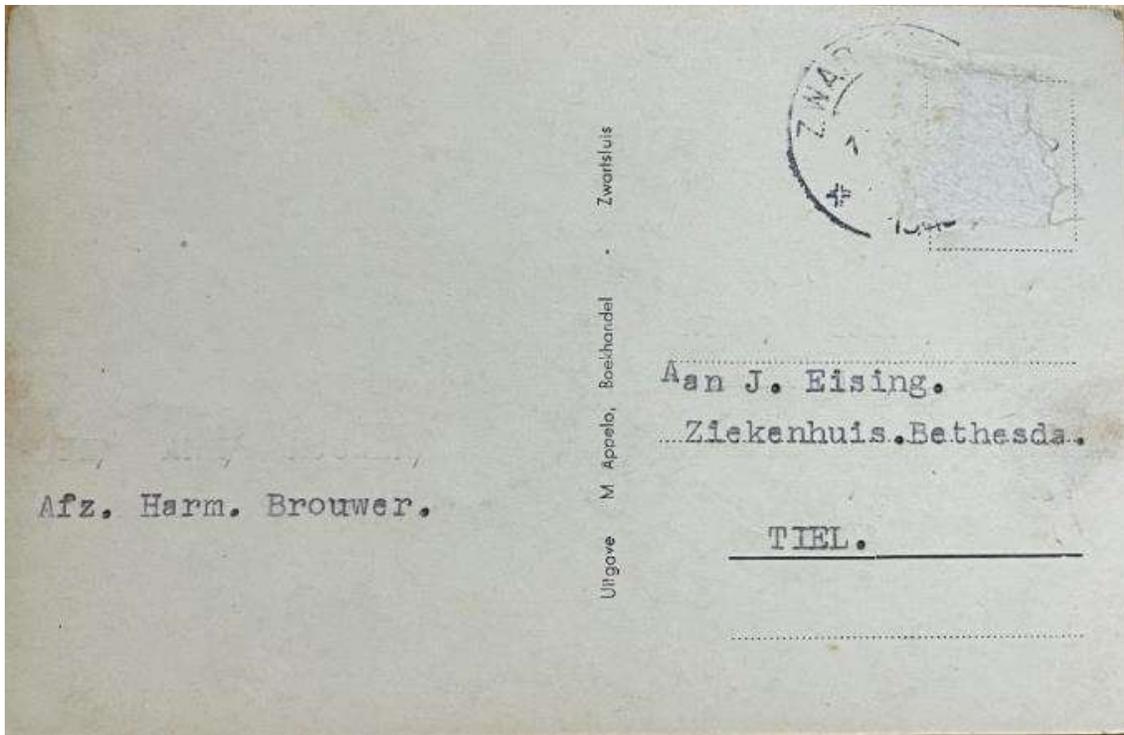
---

<sup>31</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>32</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda, and by Hendrik Jr.

<sup>33</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

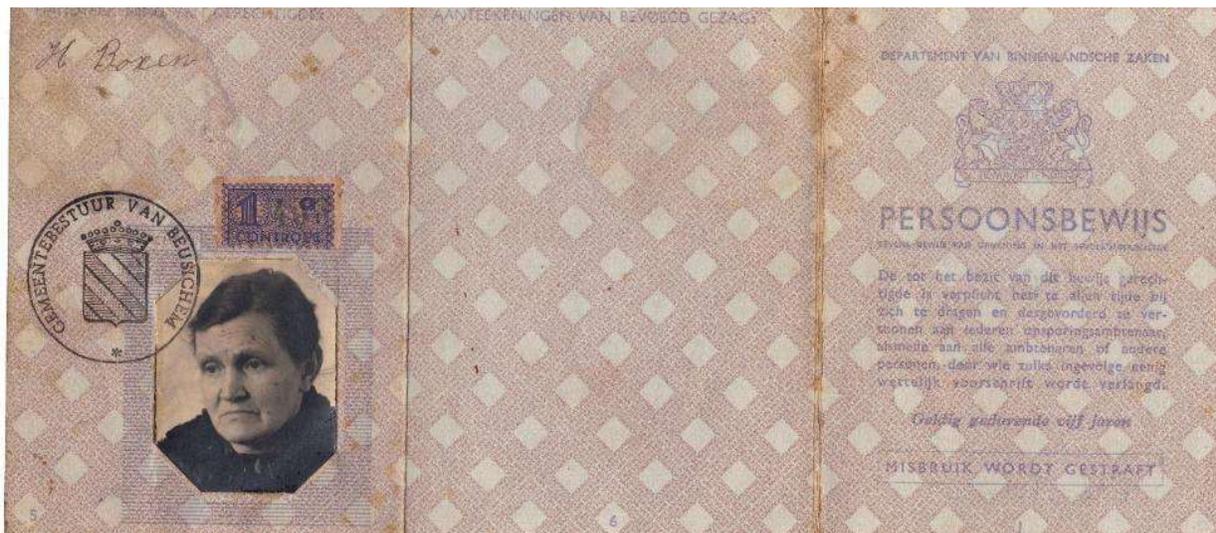
<sup>34</sup> As related by Jan in a story for his grandson.



*A postcard sent to Jannes in the hospital in Tiel from Hendriken's stepbrother, Harm Brouwer.*



*Hospital in Tiel, circa 1940.*



*Hendriekien's wartime identity card, 1941.*

There is also a story about Jannes biking to get supplies and running into a German patrol. When one of the soldiers tried to take his bike, Jannes fought him off, took back his bike and pedaled away. He was lucky he did not get shot!<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

The last winter of the war was known as the ‘Hunger Winter’. The Germans prevented fuel and food shipments into the western provinces in Holland and strict food rationing was enforced. Families in the cities were only allowed one pound of bread per week, and families in the country, two pounds. It was hard, black bread made from oats, rye, wheat, barley or peas – whatever was available. It tasted awful and after eating, they would have to pick the hard bits out of their teeth.<sup>36</sup> Some people in the city even ate their tulip bulbs. Many walked for miles out into the country begging for food at the farms and selling or trading valuables for food.<sup>37</sup> It is estimated that between 18,000 and 30,000 people died of starvation that winter.<sup>38</sup>

The Eising family always had something to eat, even though it was mostly the sugar beets they grew which were more fit for animals than for human consumption. Hendrik Jr., who would have been eight years old at the end of the war, never recalls being hungry. But he also remembers his parents stirring up a big cauldron of sugar beet soup over a fire in the yard.

During the last few months of the war, a German General commandeered their home. He and his chauffeur, and possibly some other staff, used the front part of the landlord’s half of the house. The large barn attached to the house was used to store the general’s two fancy cars, but because there was little gasoline, the cars were seldom used.<sup>39</sup> There were two other houses in the village used by German officers and *De Breedendam* was connected to them by a dedicated telephone line.<sup>40</sup>

This was a tense time for the family. They still had two *onderduikers* hiding in the loft above the barn, one from Arnhem and one from Rotterdam.<sup>41</sup> A ladder in the barn led to the loft, and the *onderduikers* would sneak down during the night, tiptoe around the General’s cars, have something to eat and drink, use the outhouse, and then return to the loft.<sup>42</sup> Mostly, this ladder would be kept in place as it was cumbersome, but sometimes the older children in the family would have to sneak into the barn at night to lift the ladder into place and then take it down later.<sup>43</sup> All this was done with the German General and his staff sleeping just on the other side of the house, as well as their landlord whom they considered to be Nazi sympathizer.

At this time the ‘front’ was a mere 15 kilometres south of Beusichem along the *River Waal*, with the Germans occupying the territory in Beusichem and the Allies holding the other side of the river for the winter. The *Waal* is part of the *Rhine River* delta and is the main distribution branch of the *Rhine River* flowing approximately 80 kilometers through the Netherlands. *De Lek*, just north of Beusichem, is also part of the delta. Hendrik Jr. recalls seeing Allied bombers going after anything that moved on the water. He also remembers the sky being black with Allied bombers flying raids into Germany. He sometimes saw the Germans towing a whole line of vehicles with one truck to conserve fuel, since gas was in such short supply.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> As related by Jan, in a story for his grandson.

<sup>37</sup> As related by Lena Hofland Eising to her daughter, Sandy.

<sup>38</sup> From Wikipedia.

<sup>39</sup> As related by Jan in a story for his grandson.

<sup>40</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>41</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>42</sup> As related by Jan in a story for his grandson.

<sup>43</sup> As related by Jan in a story for his grandson.

<sup>44</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

In April of 1945, Hendrik Sr. and Hendriken marked their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Despite the war, they decided to celebrate with a party at home. Jan remembers the German chauffeur singing a song at their urging. He didn't know any Dutch songs, so he sang 'Ave Maria' while standing on the kitchen table.<sup>45</sup>

This chauffeur was a young man from just across the Drents border in Germany. Because the Eising family had originally come from Drenthe, they all spoke a very similar dialect. He was comfortable with the family and talked to them about his life. He had been conscripted into the German army and was not happy. One of them suggested that he might want to desert the German army and become an *onderduiker*. He said that it was as likely for him to be an *onderduiker* as to be *onder de taffel* (under the table). From this, a story started that this chauffeur actually slept under the kitchen table.<sup>46</sup>

In May of 1945, the war ended. Canadian Brigadier General William Cameron Murphy drove to *De Breedendam* to meet with German General Alfred Philippi. The German General met Murphy at the door and saluted him. The Canadian General was taken aback, and after a brief hesitation, awkwardly saluted him back. The only witness to this exchange was 8-year-old Hendrik Jr., who happened to be playing in the front yard at the time!

Word spread like wildfire through the village that the Canadian General was at *De Breedendam* and within the hour, it seemed that the whole village had gathered at their doorstep.<sup>47</sup>

Later, in the *Paardenmarkt* in Beusichem, General Murphy received the surrender papers from General Philippi. The area of the Betuwe was officially liberated!<sup>48</sup>

Parties abounded in the streets, in neighbourhoods, and in the whole village. Canadians and Dutchmen alike gathered in the *Paardenmarkt* to celebrate. Allied ships laden with food were moored offshore waiting to deliver relief. The food soon arrived!<sup>49</sup>

There was an *onderduiker* still living in the loft of the barn. This young man foolishly took a sack and filled it with cigarettes and whiskey stolen from the general's car and tried to leave, possibly to join a street party. When the German soldiers guarding the driveway ordered him to open his sack and realized that his booty had come from their general's car, they were going to shoot him. After all, they had shot many of their own people for stealing. They leveled their guns at him but either Hendrik or Hendriken, who had seen the whole situation from the window, came out and intervened with the guards to spare him because the war was over. After some persuasion, they let him go.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> As related by Jan in a story for his grandson.

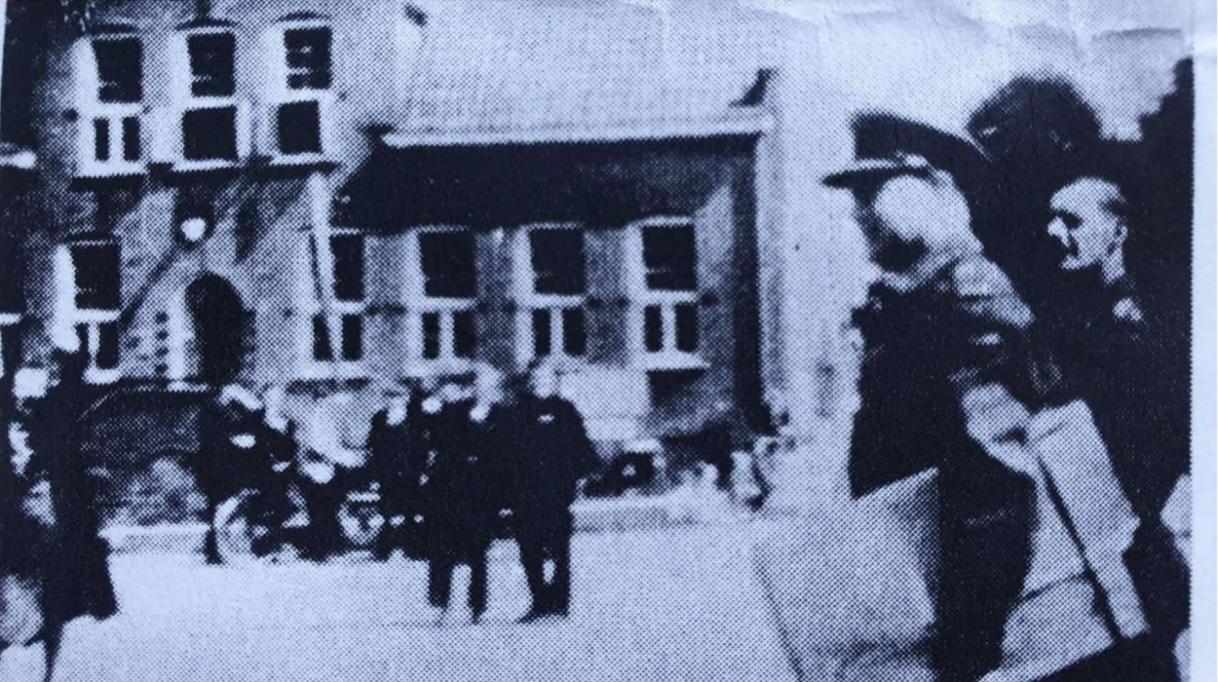
<sup>46</sup> Slightly varying stories as related by Jan for his grandson, and by Hendrik Jr.

<sup>47</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>48</sup> From an article about the 'Dagboek' of Brigadier General William Cameron Murphy.

<sup>49</sup> As related by Jan in a story for his grandson.

<sup>50</sup> As related by Jan in a story for his grandson.



Canadian Brigadier General William Cameron Murphy (right) at the Paardenmarkt in Beusichem for the surrender of the Germans, 7 May 1945.<sup>51</sup>

So, the war was over; the Allies and particularly, the Canadians, had liberated the Netherlands!

### **After the War**

The days following the war were happy for the Dutch but tumultuous for the liberators. Canadian Brigadier General Murphy was given the task of keeping order in the region. He had to disarm groups who had been in the resistance movement. He had the logistics of distributing food to a hungry population. He also had to deal with Belgian soldiers who had plundered the German Headquarters in Beusichem and tried to trade the seized weapons on the black market. The mayor of Beusichem asked Murphy for more troops to keep order. Also, he promised to organize a parade in Beusichem. He was a man of high moral standards and would tolerate no misconduct from the Allied troops or mistreatment of the German soldiers. He stayed in the area until some time in June 1945.<sup>52</sup>

About a week after the war ended, Hendrik Jr. remembers seeing long lines of German soldiers being marched through the town on their way back to Germany. They were likely headed to a ferry to get across *De Lek*.

With the war over, and order being restored, Hendrik Sr. had decisions to make. His rent-to-own agreement for *De Breedendam* was coming to its end. He and his family had worked hard on the farm,

---

<sup>51</sup> From an article about the 'Dagboek' of Brigadier General William Cameron Murphy.

<sup>52</sup> From an article about the 'Dagboek' of Brigadier General William Cameron Murphy.

making many improvements and they wanted to buy the farm. The landlord, however, refused to honour the agreement. Hendrik was outraged and bitterly disappointed.

To make matters more grievous, they suspected the landlord of having been an *NSB'er*, a Nazi sympathizer. It is unclear if tribunal proceedings were initiated to decide the matter, but the end result was that Hendrik was unable to buy the farm. He lost all the rent he had paid and the many improvements he and his family had made working towards their ownership of the farm.

Hendrik was so disillusioned, hurt and disappointed! He had worked hard on the farm. He had risked his own and his family's lives for their country by doing perilous work in the *underground*, and he lost his farm to someone who had dishonourably backed out of a legal agreement – and that man was a despised *NBS'er*! That this could happen in his country ate away at him. It was a major factor in his decision to emigrate.

So, the family could no longer live at *De Breedendam*. They moved to a rented house in nearby Zoelmond in 1946 and Hendrik purchased the crop from a nearby orchard for two growing seasons; he supplied the labour and was entitled to sell any fruit produced by the trees.<sup>53</sup>

He got involved in local politics and ran for municipal council in 1946, but he got only a handful of votes.<sup>54</sup>

He also served on a committee to report on the local boys who were in the military in Indonesia.<sup>55</sup> This was personal for him as his oldest son, Willem, served there.

Jannes continued to work with fruit trees and advertised himself as a tree grafter.<sup>56</sup>

And he started investigating emigration. He considered both Brazil and Canada, but Brazil was too Catholic for his comfort, so he decided on Canada.<sup>57</sup> Besides, the Canadians were his liberators.

Hendrik Jr. went to the Christian school in nearby Ravenswaaij. There he had a friend whose father was away from home although nobody talked about it. Hendrik Sr. was not pleased about the friendship when he found out about it. The friend's father was being held at Camp Westerbork awaiting trial. He had been an *NSB'er* during the war and had been so high up in the puppet government that he had actually met Hitler.<sup>58</sup>

Westerbork was a camp in the province of Drenthe which held Nazi collaborators and war criminals after the war until they could face trial. During the war, it had been a deportation camp, run by the Nazis, for those being sent to concentration camps. Anne Frank had been detained at Westerbork and sent to Auschwitz from there. It had originally been built by the Dutch government in 1939 as a place to shelter refugees escaping Germany and Austria, particularly Jews escaping persecution.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>54</sup> Culemborgsche Courant, 1946-06-13, p 3 & Culemborgsche Courant, 1946-07-31, p 3.

<sup>55</sup> Culemborgsche Courant, 1947-04-23, p 3.

<sup>56</sup> Culemborgsche Courant, 1947-04-16, p 4.

<sup>57</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>58</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>59</sup> From Wikipedia.

During the war, many young men had hidden to escape forced labour for the Nazis. After liberation, most *onderduikers* returned home but some stayed where they had been hiding. One young man, Anton Vis, had been hiding at the Eising family farm in Meppen, now owned by Hendrik Sr.'s brother, Jan. He decided to stay on there. Jan's elderly mother-in-law needed care and Aaltje, Hendrik's oldest daughter went to her Oom Jan to help, spending the better parts of 1945, '46 and '47 there. She and Anton met there and were married in 1947. Their wedding party was held at the house in Zoelmond and then they lived at Camp Westerbork where Anton was a cook.

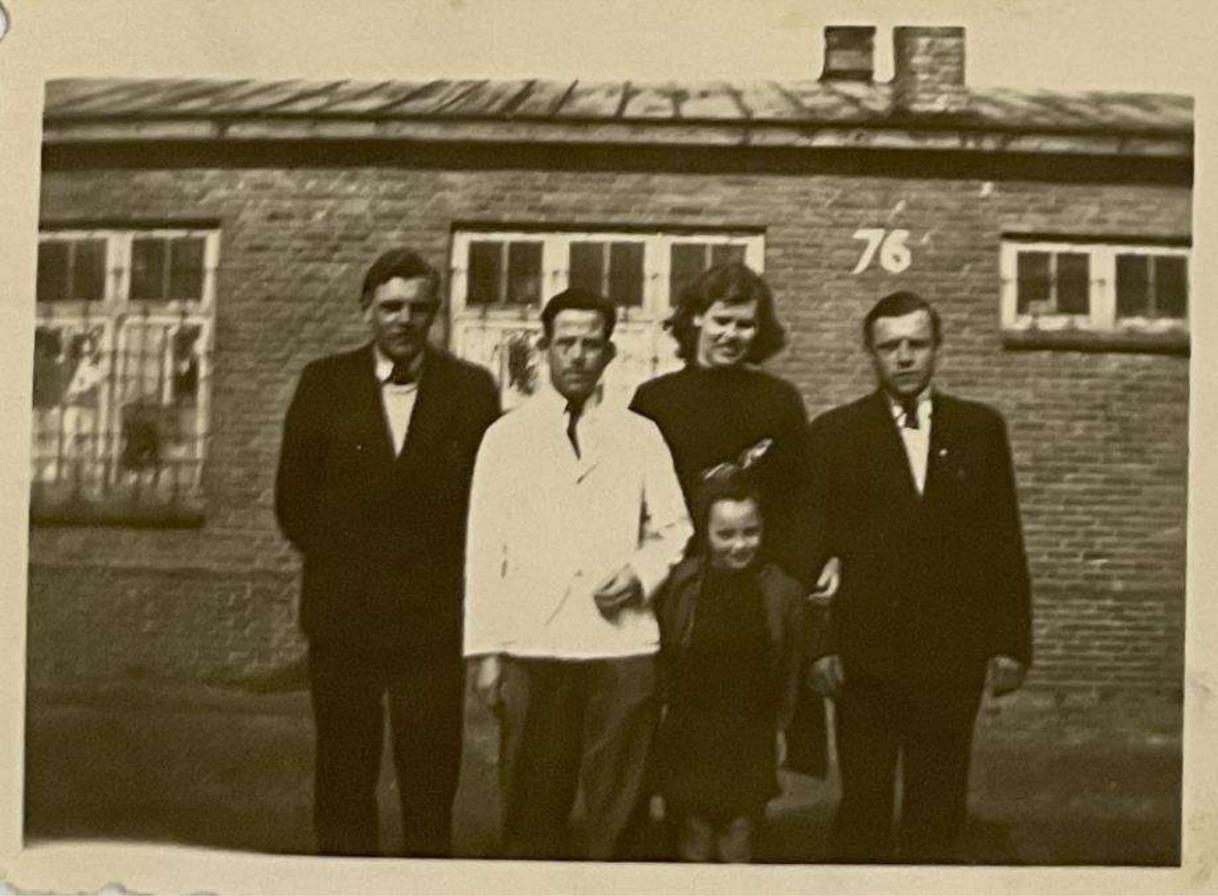


*Aaltje & Anton, 4 September 1947.*

Hendrik Jr. liked to visit his sister Aaltje during school holidays. He spent two weeks each summer with her, in 1946, '47 and '48, first near the family farm in Meppen where she was caring for Oom Jan's elderly mother-in-law in Aalden, and then at Camp Westerbork after she got married. Aaltje and Anton lived in a duplex, the only family house in the camp; they lived in one half and a chauffeur with his family lived in the other half. Hendrik Jr. had a great time there because they had a fully equipped recreation hall. He played many games of ping pong with the chauffeur's daughter and became very skilled at the game.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.



*Jan (left), and Jannes (right) visit Aaltje & Anton (centre two) before leaving for Canada (chauffeur's daughter, Hendrik Jr's ping pong partner also pictured).*

Aaltje and Anton's first child, Leo was born at Westerbork in 1948. He was delivered by a doctor who was interned at the camp as an NSB'er. Their second child, Henny, was also born while they lived there but she was born in nearby Assen in 1950. Sister Trijntje went to Westerbork to help Aaltje with the babies after they were born.



*Hendrik Jr. and Leo, the first grandchild, 1948.*

It is not clear where Willem was during the war, but after the war he served in the Dutch military in Indonesia. During the war, the Japanese had occupied Indonesia and took over the Dutch colony, but after the Japanese surrender in August 1945, the Indonesians wanted their independence. The Netherlands sought to regain control because of the rich resources there, so the Dutch army went to recapture the colony. The Dutch government portrayed this action as peacekeeping. Each family with military-age sons was required to send one of them to fight in Indonesia. From the Eising family, Willem was conscripted; he served in Indonesia until early in 1948. Unfortunately, Willem suffered some ill effects from his experiences there and suffered from nightmares for the rest of his life. In December 1949, bowing to international pressure, the Netherlands formally recognized Indonesian independence.<sup>61</sup>

In 1946, Willem wrote a letter home to his youngest brother, 9-year-old Hendrik, and told of some of his experiences in the military camp. He mentioned the English and the British Indian armies pulling out, and that it was good that the Dutch were there to take over. He also mentioned that his army buddies liked their Cognac and would sometimes get a little tipsy. He related that a friend of the family, by the last name of Klomp, was also in the area; this may be someone from the same Klomp family who wrote a letter to Hendrik Sr. in later years (that story still to come).

There was a young lady in the Netherlands, Riny van Vliet, whose class wrote letters to Indonesian soldiers. Her family knew the Eisings, so she wrote to Willem. She had a personal connection to the military because her brother had disappeared right after the war, and they never saw him again. They always wondered if he had been picked up by the Russians when he tried to make his way home from a German camp after liberation.

Willem and Riny continued their correspondence and after his discharge from the army, he looked her up. They married in 1949.



*Willem in Indonesia, 1946.*



*Willem & Riny, 1949.*

---

<sup>61</sup> From Wikipedia and as related by Willem's daughter, Margaret.

## Immigration

While living in Zoelmond, after the disappointment of losing *De Breedendam*, the family made plans to emigrate to Canada. The Dutch government encouraged emigration partially because there was not enough land for all those who wanted to be farmers; the Germans had flooded a lot of land which would take a long time to return to production. Also, the Netherlands was a small, densely populated country and housing was in short supply, and the population was growing because of the number of citizens being repatriated from Indonesia.<sup>62</sup>

At the same time, many Dutchmen wanted to emigrate because they saw no real future for their children in the Netherlands. There were rising rents and taxes, the economy was poor, housing was scarce, and there were too many rules and regulations with creeping socialism. In addition, many patriotic Dutchmen were disillusioned with their government because so many civil servants had been *NSB'ers*, and with only a slap on the wrist after the war, many had returned to positions of influence.<sup>63</sup> Hendrik Sr.'s disappointment in his country was not uncommon.

There were many requirements to meet before they could go. First, they needed a sponsor in Canada. Then they needed passports, fees for the ships, and a declaration that all their taxes were paid. Only a certain amount of money could be taken from the country, so some families put money in trust for later use while others distributed it to relatives. They also needed to pass a physical examination at the Canadian immigration office. If all requirements were met, they would get a visa.<sup>64</sup> Between 1947 and 1949, close to 16,000 Dutchmen from farm families resettled in Canada.<sup>65</sup>

The Eising family started the immigration process. Unfortunately, Trijntje did not pass the physical exam because she had broken out in boils; they would have to delay until she was better. It was decided that Jannes and Jan should still go and get sponsors for the rest of them.<sup>66</sup>

In 1948, Jannes and Jan immigrated on an agricultural program. Jannes had his fruit growing certificates and Jan also had an agricultural certificate. They left Rotterdam aboard the *Kota Inten* on May 7<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Quebec City on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Jannes had celebrated his 26<sup>th</sup> birthday on the boat. They came with only a suitcase of clothes and \$100 each (about \$1350 in 2025). Curiously, in the departure records in Rotterdam, they are listed as Mr. and Mrs. J. Eising, so their sponsor may have thought he was getting a married couple instead of two brothers. Their departure from Beusichem was noted in the *Tiel* newspaper.<sup>67</sup>

Their destination was Woodstock, Ontario, where they had a sponsor. One thing that Jannes noticed right away, with his interest in fruit growing, was that the trees in Southern Ontario were in full bloom but when they left Holland, they were barely starting to bud.<sup>68</sup> It seems that Jan worked at a tobacco farm for at least several months, but for some reason, Jannes worked at a cheese factory in nearby Kintore. He earned \$70/month (about \$920 in 2025) and lived in an apartment above the cheese

---

<sup>62</sup> From book: *To All My Children, the Story of the Postwar Dutch Immigration to Canada*, by Albert VanderMey.

<sup>63</sup> From book: *To All My Children, the Story of the Postwar Dutch Immigration to Canada*, by Albert VanderMey.

<sup>64</sup> From book: *To All My Children, the Story of the Postwar Dutch Immigration to Canada*, by Albert VanderMey.

<sup>65</sup> From Pier 21 website.

<sup>66</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>67</sup> *Nieuwe Tielsche Courant*, 1948-07-20, p 7.

<sup>68</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

factory owner's garage with other labourers. He stayed at the cheese factory for two and a half months.<sup>69</sup> Jannes was not happy there because he had to work every Sunday, doing what he thought, with his Calvinist upbringing, was unnecessary work; he took the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment seriously and wanted to be faithful. He was also not impressed with some of the activities at the factory.<sup>70</sup>



*Jannes, passport photo, circa 1947.*



*Jan, circa 1947*



*Jannes with his first car, a 1936 Chevy.*

---

<sup>69</sup> As told by Jannes to Nelda's son, Justin.

<sup>70</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

One of his first Sundays there, Jannes was walking home after church, and came across an annoying black and white cat that blocked his path. He kicked at it and was promptly sprayed; they didn't have skunks in Holland! And he was wearing his Sunday best, his new immigration suit. He left his clothes outside and tried to scrub off the smell but when his roommates got home, they couldn't stand the odour and slept that night in the home of their boss. He had to bury his suit but saved his shoes;<sup>71</sup> the next spring, his family could still catch a whiff of skunk on them.<sup>72</sup>

Another time, one of the other labourers put water in his boots. Jannes got him back by pouring a whole bucket of ice water over him while he was in the shower. He was so shocked that he ran bare naked through the cheese factory, and he never had water in his boots again.<sup>73</sup>

The Christian Reformed Church was growing rapidly with the large influx of immigrants from the Netherlands. One of those new congregations started in 1947 in Ingersoll. It met in the home of Wietze Mulder whom Jannes met his very first Sunday in Canada. The young men were often invited to stay for lunch between the morning and afternoon services, and Jannes noticed the picture of Wietze's lovely, younger sister, Jansje. He thought she looked quite nice. After a long and fruitful discussion with Wietze and his wife, he was assured of Jansje's sensitive, good character and strong spirituality. He decided to write to her but not until he had found a new job.<sup>74</sup> He also asked Wietze if he could board there temporarily since he was not happy at the cheese factory.

In August, Jannes found work at Leavers in Port Credit, a 375-acre farm, picking tomatoes, cutting mushrooms and working alongside women who, to his surprise, did field work. He also worked with labourers who were Japanese, English, Scottish, Dutch and a few large Frisian families. The Frisians often thought his surname was Eisinga. The Dutch and Frisians were a sizable group and wanted to start their own congregation which became the Clarkson Christian Reformed Church in 1950. Jannes boarded with a Frisian family, and they discussed Jansje being Frisian while he wasn't. He wondered if this might impress her.<sup>75</sup> He also bought his first car, a 1936 Chevy. Jan may also have worked at the mushroom farm for a short time.

While he was in Port Credit working at Leavers, Jannes decided it was time to write to Jansje. When she received the letter, she thought her brothers had put him up to it and wasn't going to answer, but her mother thought he sounded like a nice Christian man and encouraged her to write back. Their correspondence blossomed into a serious relationship. Very soon in their correspondence, he expressed his hope that Jansje might join him in Canada.

Later that year, Jansje travelled about 60 kilometers from her hometown in Boornbergum, Friesland, to Westerbork to meet Jannes' sister, Aaltje. Hendriken was also there for one last visit with her stepmother who was in her final illness. Early the following year, Jansje also travelled 180 kilometers to Zoelmond to meet the rest of the family. Jannes received a good report about Jansje from his mother and sister. Then Jannes persuaded her to come to Canada to meet him in person, and he

---

<sup>71</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>72</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>73</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>74</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>75</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

would sponsor her as his bride-to-be. That meant she would have to marry him within three months or return to Holland. She came to meet him later that year.<sup>76</sup>

In the summer of 1948, Jannes found a sponsor for his family. It was at the Bell fruit farm in Burlington on Brant Street where the owner could offer work for Jannes and Hendrik Sr, and a house big enough for the whole family, including Jan.

From Burlington, Jannes went to church at the First CRC in Hamilton, taking a bus to get there. One Sunday, Jan showed up and the brothers happily spent the day together after not seeing each other for eight weeks. The church was crowded with new immigrants.<sup>77</sup>

Jannes worked hard to improve his English and read *The Banner*. But he also read *De Wachter*, and still preferred church services in the Dutch language. He asked one man at church if he could pick up some extra work with him to improve his carpentry skills and earn some more money to save for his farm.<sup>78</sup>

Jannes worried that his 53-year-old parents would not feel at home there, having gone through so much during the war, and he worried about Hendrikien who had frequent headaches. Nevertheless, he hoped they could join him by September, but the paperwork was not done on time.<sup>79</sup>



*Hendrikien passport photo, 1948.*



*Trijntje, passport photo, circa 1948.*

---

<sup>76</sup> From a Memoir written by Jannes' wife, Jansje.

<sup>77</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>78</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>79</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

In March 1949, Hendrik Sr., Hendriken, Trijntje and Hendrik Jr. prepared to leave the Netherlands. Their departure was noted in the local newspaper.<sup>80</sup> They stayed with Aaltje in Westerbork for a few days first, and Willem, having returned from Indonesia the previous summer,<sup>81</sup> saw them off. Willem then departed for Maarsen,<sup>82</sup> a village closer to his sweetheart, Riny.

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, the family left Hoek van Holland on a ferry to Harwick. From there they took a bus to downtown London and stayed in a fancy hotel that had real silverware in the dining room. The next day they took a train to Southampton. Young Hendrik was mesmerised looking down from a train platform and seeing trains way below going deep underground. They boarded the *Aquitania* and steamed across the Atlantic in a week. Trijntje had a short romance while on board which helped her pass the time on the ship. They arrived in Halifax at Pier 21 on March 14<sup>th</sup>.<sup>83</sup>

RMS *Aquitania* was the last surviving 'four-stacker', the most famous of which was the *Titanic*. *Aquitania* was the Cunard Line's answer to the *Titanic* which was owned by the White Star Line; the companies later merged. The *Aquitania* served as a troop carrier during the war and afterwards carried Canadian troops home, and then migrants to Canada. The Eising family travelled on it during the last year that it was in service. In 1950, it was scrapped.<sup>84</sup>



*The family leaving Hoek van Holland on the ferry, 7 March 1949.*

---

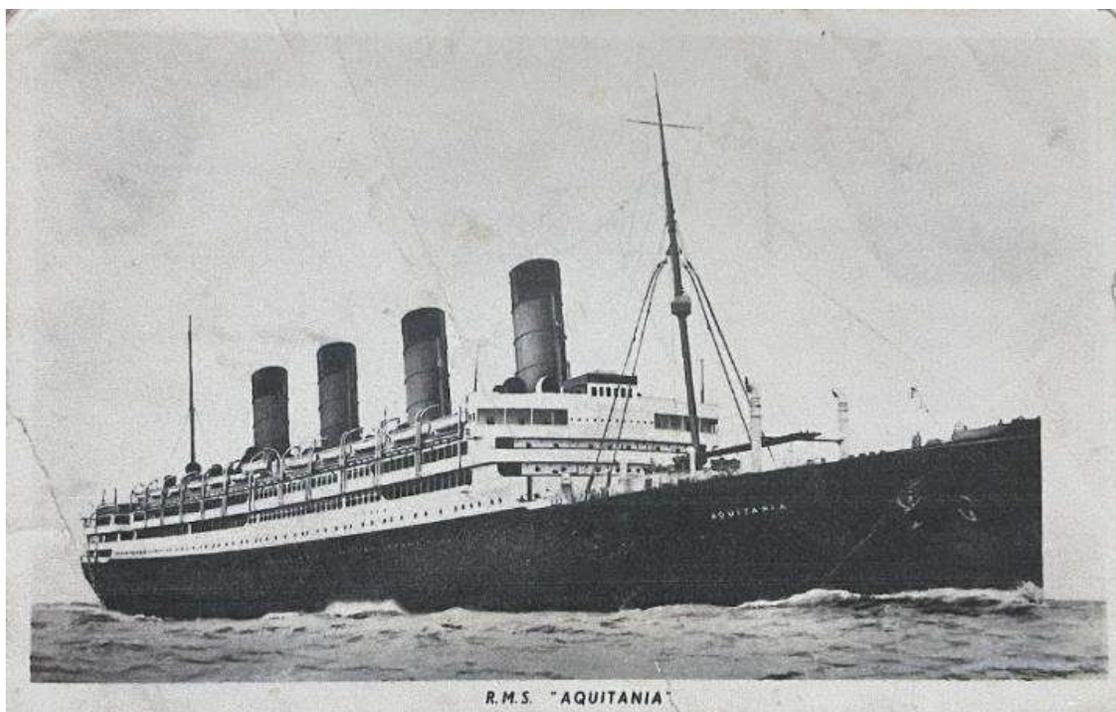
<sup>80</sup> Culemborgsche Courant, 1949-04-01.

<sup>81</sup> Culemborgsche Courant, 1948-06-16.

<sup>82</sup> Culemborgsche Courant, 1949-05-04.

<sup>83</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>84</sup> From Wikipedia.



*The Aquitania, circa 1950.*

Pier 21 was well-organized to receive crowds of immigrants. Before they disembarked from their ships, railway officials came aboard to hand out name tags listing destination, name of sponsor, and the train they would take. They then presented their travel voucher at the ticketing counters to be validated. They likely telegraphed either Jannes or their sponsor that they had landed. After being processed through immigration and customs, they made their way to the train across the street where church representatives distributed their church newspapers.<sup>85</sup> No doubt Hendrik received a copy of *The Calvinist Contact*.

The family then travelled by train, leaving Halifax on Monday night and arriving in Burlington on Wednesday morning. Jannes met them at the station in his '36 Chevy, still wearing his skunky shoes. The weather was bitterly cold when they arrived, and they must have wondered if they had made the right decision in immigrating. Jannes drove them down Main Street in Hamilton on their first Saturday night there. Young Hendrik was astonished at all the lights and the traffic. He had come from a dark, quiet village and the city amazed him. That first summer they also made a trip to Niagara Falls.

---

<sup>85</sup> From Pier 21 website.



*First visit to Niagara Falls. L-R: Jannes, Hendrikien, Hendrik Jr, Hendrik Sr., Trijntje, 1949.*

They lived and worked on the fruit farm in Burlington for about four months. Jannes was relieved that his parents seemed to like it there. He had furnished the house for them, and he let Jansje know that there was a sewing machine for her as Hendrikien had brought hers from Holland.

Hendrik Jr., 12 years old, attended school where he was put in a Grade 2 class to learn English. He was embarrassed to be put with such young children and the kids his own age made fun of him. It was not an easy time for him.<sup>86</sup>

The family attended English classes and young Hendrik picked up the language quickly. Trijntje practiced by trying to sing out of the English hymnal from church. Jannes and Trijntje attended the young adult's group at church on Friday evenings, and when Jannes had to do the essay, they got home quite late. Some Sunday evenings, they would all attend the local Presbyterian church.<sup>87</sup>

In July, Jannes found a better paying job at the gypsum mine in Hagersville and boarded with a family there. The fruit farmer in Burlington did not want to employ Hendrik Sr. without Jannes, so they had to find other work. They went to an estate farm on Sulphur Springs Road in Ancaster where Hendrik Sr. tended the horses and Hendrikien worked in the house. Hendrik Sr. had a connection with the horses that the farmer was envious of; it seems he was a bit of a horse whisperer.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>87</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>88</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in a conversation.

Hendrik Sr. thought that some of his duties were frivolous; being a practical, hard-working Calvinist, he could not see the point of dusting windowsills in a horse barn. He also did not drive, and did not want to learn, so the farmer still had to do some of the chores himself, such as taking the garbage to the dump, that he would have liked Hendrik Sr. to do. It was not entirely a good fit although they did enjoy their time there.<sup>89</sup> Trijntje found work as a domestic close by. Some evenings, they would sing hymns together and apparently Hendrik Sr. had a nice voice.<sup>90</sup>



*The family at the farm in Ancaster, 1949. L-R top: Jannes, Hendrik Jr. Trijntje. L-R bottom: Jan, Hendrik Sr., Hendriken.*

Young Hendrik had a better time at school in Ancaster. He was with kids his own age and it was a lovely new building; it even had a ping pong table. With skills he had learned in the Westerbork recreation hall, Hendrik became the school's table tennis champion. He also joined the Boy Scouts. He would sometimes ride his bike down the mountain in Hamilton to attend catechism classes at First Christian Reformed Church and then pedal all the way back up! He had a paper route, and in the summer, he picked tomatoes<sup>91</sup>. He stayed in school until he finished Grade 7 and after that, he went to work to help the family, as was the case with many immigrant families.

---

<sup>89</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>90</sup> From a Memoir written by Jannes' wife, Jansje.

<sup>91</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.



*Boy Scout Hendrik Jr., circa 1950.*



*Jan with friends at the Sulphur Springs in Ancaster, 1950.*

In September, 1949, Willem and Riny were married in Holland.



*Willem & Riny, 30 September 1949.*

In October, Jannes would finally see his sweetheart in person. Jansje sailed aboard the *Aquitania*, landing in Halifax at Pier 21, and taking the train to Hamilton. Jannes picked her up in his 1936 Chevy and brought her to stay with his parents in Ancaster. She was surprised by two things: that he was shorter than she had expected, and that he didn't smoke like the other young men,<sup>92</sup> but she found him to be quite likable.



*Jannes Eising, circa 1947.*



*Jansje Mulder, circa 1947.*

In November, he drove her to Ingersoll to see her two brothers whom she hadn't seen since they immigrated in 1947 and 1948. Jannes and Jansje were engaged there and had a small family celebration including a quartet formed by her brothers and their wives. Jansje's family loved singing.<sup>93</sup>

Jansje's parents had hoped they could come to Holland to get married, but realized how such an expense was not an option for Jannes, a poor immigrant, who was saving his money to buy a farm. Instead, they wrote him a very nice letter. Jansje found work at a near-by doctor's home; sometimes Hendrik Jr. would walk her to work. She sewed Hendrikien's dress for the wedding, and her sisters-in-law helped her find her wedding dress. Her family in Ingersoll found a ride to Hamilton because they did not have cars yet and everybody stayed at the Eising house in Ancaster: 6 Eisings and 11 Mulders, including 6 busy children. Everyone pitched in for meals.

---

<sup>92</sup> From a conversation with Lena Hofland Eising.

<sup>93</sup> From a Memoir written by Jannes' wife, Jansje.

They had their wedding party on a Saturday night and were married the next day during the regular Sunday morning church service in January 1950 at First CRC in Hamilton. It was the first Eising family wedding on Canadian soil. During the church service, they sang the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm in Dutch which was beloved by both of them, and in the hours before his death in 2014, Jannes sang it to her one last time. They settled in Hagersville where Jannes had found a house to rent. He filled the yard of that house with trees and flowers. Their first son, Henry, was born a year later while they lived here.<sup>94</sup>



*Jannes & Jansje, 29 January 1950.*

Another notable event that January was the arrival of a letter granting approval for Aaltje and Anton to immigrate. They arrived in Halifax on the *Volendam* on May 25 with almost-2-year-old Leo and 4-month-old Henny. They stayed with the family in Ancaster, and Anton found work in Hamilton at the Royal Connaught Hotel as a chef doing the breakfasts and making soups.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> From a Memoir written by Jannes' wife, Jansje.

<sup>95</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024, and from Aaltje's son, Leo.

ADDRESS  
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT  
CENTRAL DISTRICT  
737 Church St.



CANADA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF  
MINES AND RESOURCES

IN YOUR REPLY REFER TO  
No. **CD-1-11784**  
IMMIGRATION  
BRANCH

Toronto, January 4, 1950.

Dear Sir:

You will be pleased to know that approval has been given to your application for the admission to Canada of your daughter, Aaltje Vis, your son-in-law, Antoni Johannes Vis, and your grandson, Leo Vis,

residing at **Kamp Westerbork,  
Dr Netherlands,**

Provided, therefore, the proposed immigrants are of good character, in possession of valid passport,

can pass medical examination and otherwise comply with Immigration requirements, visa for Canada will be granted.

Advice to this effect is being forwarded to  
**Immigration Attache,  
Canadian Embassy Visa Office,  
Alexanderstraat 23,  
The Hague, Holland,**

who will communicate with the proposed immigrants and make an appointment for medical and civil examination.

This letter should be forwarded to **Antoni Johannes Vis,** who should keep it carefully for presentation to the above-mentioned official, who will get in touch with him in due course.

Hendrik Eising, Esq.,  
c/o Donald Ropes,  
Sulphur Spring Road,  
Ancaster, Ontario.

Yours very truly,

W. J. Bambrick,  
District Superintendent.



Aaltje & Anton's Immigration Identity Cards.



Newspaper clipping, May 1950.



Aaltje & Anton with baby Leo, 1948.

Now that almost all the Eising family was in Canada, some anglicized their names. Jannes and Jansje, and Anton, all kept their names the same, but Aaltje became Aly, Jan became John, Trijntje became Tryn, and Hendrik Jr. became Henry. And, of course, because there were now grandchildren with them, Hendrik Sr. and Hendriken became Opa and Oma.

That summer, in 1950 (or possibly the previous summer), John bought a car, a beautiful 1946 Chevy, so he could drive for the family. He also had a Model A Coupe. He lived with the family in Ancaster and rented about 10 acres of good land about a kilometer down the road. He grew tomatoes and beans and sold them at the market in Hamilton. Opa and Henry both helped him keep the vegetable plot clean. He traded his Chevy for a truck to do the farm work but before he did that, he let young Henry, at age 12 or 13, drive once between the house and his vegetable plot.<sup>96</sup>

In August, the family relocated to Concession 6 near Jarvis with a rented house and some land. Aly and the two children went with them while Anton lived and worked in Hamilton. He joined his family on the weekends. Oma would walk two or three miles into town to get groceries.<sup>97</sup> The next growing season, they grew tomatoes and cucumbers and had bumper crops.<sup>98</sup>



*Oma & Opa, Jarvis, 1955.*

---

<sup>96</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>97</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>98</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

John lived with Jannes and Jansje for awhile, then found work as an orderly in the psychiatric hospital in Hamilton. With limited treatment options in those days, some patients were just left to scream all night while tied to their beds.<sup>99</sup> John found the work traumatizing and quit after only a short time.

He went to work as a logger 40 miles north of Cochrane to regain his equilibrium. It took him the better part of three days to drive there in his Model A coupe. The loggers were paid by piece work and John did not have the tools or experience of the other loggers, so he did not make much money. He bought a team of horses and hauled logs to the river to float them out. He also found it very cold, so he stayed only one winter. While working in the logging camp, he attended church in Cochrane. When he returned, he found work on a tobacco farm near Kitchener.<sup>100</sup>



*John (centre) in the bush north of Cochrane, winter 1950/51.*

In June 1951, the family was still living near Jarvis and Aly was pregnant with her third child. She went into labour in the middle of the night, and there was nobody there who could take her to the hospital. Opa, Oma and Tryn had never learned to drive, and young Henry was only 14 – but he *did* know how to drive! So, under-aged Henry jumped into the car and took his older sister to the hospital in Hagersville where she safely delivered little Tryny (Terry).<sup>101</sup> Terry said in later years that she was always very fond of her Uncle Henry.

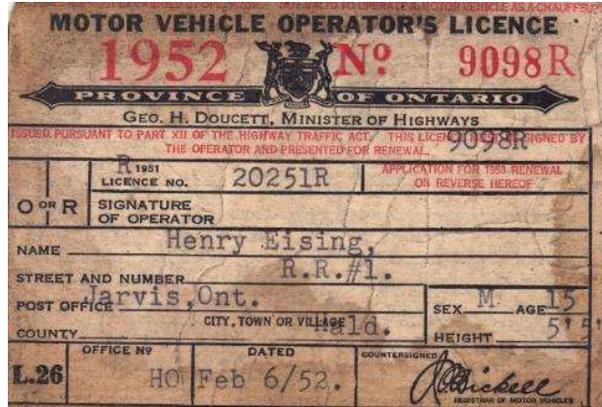
---

<sup>99</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>100</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024, and as related by John's daughter, Jane.

<sup>101</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

The next year, in February 1952, there was still no one else in the family who could drive. Tryn and Opa, had found jobs at the canning factory in Simcoe and needed to get to work. And how to get shopping done and get to church and catechism classes? So, Henry, at age 15, got special permission from the Chief of Police in Jarvis to get his licence. Even though his driving was restricted to the family car, all the other boys his age at church were jealous because they had to wait until they were 16.



*Henry's licence at age 15.*

In 1952, Henry started work at J.B. Jackson, a grocery wholesaler, in Simcoe. He worked in the warehouse for them until he turned 16 in September. Then he drove the delivery truck, even bringing loads into downtown Hamilton.

In 1951, Jannes finally had enough money saved to buy a farm. He purchased a 50-acre dairy farm near Sandusk. He really would have liked a fruit farm, but they were too expensive. He bought cows, pigs and some equipment, and got his farm operational, all the while continuing work at the gypsum mine. Jannes & Jansje's next four children were born while they lived at this farm: Nelda in 1952, Rita in 1953, Arnold in 1955, and Melinda in 1958.



*Jannes & Jansje, Oma & Opa, Tryn, & John at the farm near Sandusk, circa 1950.*



*Jannes' 50-acre farm near Sandusk.*

While living in Ancaster, Tryn had met a young man, John Nykamp, at a youth event. She quite liked him. He had immigrated in March of 1949, the same time that Tryn did, but he came by airplane into Montreal. He was only 10 years old when the Germans had invaded Holland in 1940, and by the end of the war, his parents had a hard time convincing the Germans that he was too young to be conscripted for forced labour. Then after the war, he did not want to be conscripted into the Dutch army to fight in Indonesia, so he decided to immigrate. His father tried to discourage him but John was adamant so his father decided that if John immigrated, his whole family should go, too.<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> As related by Tryn's daughter, Henny.



*Tryn, circa 1949.*



*John Nykamp, on his Barnett motorbike, circa 1953.*

John and Tryn kept seeing each other and in May 1952, they got married at Ebenezer CRC in Jarvis. They rented a farm near Jarvis which they were able to buy several years later in 1961. He also worked at the gypsum mine in Hagersville. All their children were born while living there: Henny in 1953, Joyce in 1954, Alice in 1956, Teresa in 1957, and Trudy in 1961.



*Tryn & John, 15 May 1952.*



*John Nykamp & Tryn at their farm with Oma & Opa, and children L-R: Joyce, Henny, & Alice, circa 1957.*



*Riny, Oma, Tryn and Opa, Jarvis, circa 1953.*

In 1952, the whole family was finally reunited in Canada. Willem and Riny came to Canada aboard the *Sibajak*, leaving Rotterdam on April 26, 1952 and landing in Quebec City on May 4<sup>th</sup>. There was another passenger aboard that same ship named Lena Hofland. They didn't know it at the time, but they would eventually become family. When Willem and Riny arrived, they stayed with Jannes and Jansje for a time, and then with Oma and Opa in Jarvis.



1952: The whole family is reunited in Canada. Standing L-R: John Nykamp, Anton Vis, Henry, John, Willem, Jannes. Seated L-R: Tryn, Aly, Opa, Oma, Riny, Jansje. Children L-R: Henny Vis, Tryny Vis, Leo Vis, Henry (Jannes) Eising.



*Locations where the family lived in Southern Ontario.*

## Getting Established

On New Years Day in 1953, Henry went to a skating party in the Simcoe arena. There he met a pretty, new immigrant named Lena Hofland. He asked if he could drive her home afterwards, and even though she had come with her younger sister, she ditched her and went home with Henry.

Henry and Lena saw each other regularly after that, and Lena's family also started going to the Christian Reformed Church. They had been Salvation Army in Holland and were attending a Baptist Church in Simcoe with their sponsors, but with all the Dutch immigrants, they felt at home in the CRC.

By this time, Willem and Riny were expecting their first child. When Riny went into labour, 16-year-old Henry was called on to bring her to the hospital in their half-ton Fargo pickup truck because Willem only drove a motorcycle. Henry did not enjoy that drive as she cried out loudly with each labour pain.<sup>103</sup> Little Tony was born in April in Hagersville.

In 1953, Opa, Oma, and Henry relocated to a rented house on Highway 24 near Simcoe. Aly did not move with them; her fourth child, Bob, was born in Hagersville in 1954 so she may still have been in

---

<sup>103</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

the area. Around this time, she joined Anton in the Hamilton area, and they rented a house in Fruitland. Later, they bought their own house. Their fifth child, Irene, was born in Hamilton in 1958.

When Opa and Oma moved to Simcoe, Willem and Riny got an apartment there. Willem worked as a carpenter and helped build the Woolworth store on the main intersection in downtown Simcoe. Willem was outspokenly anti-union, but he would have had to join up if he wanted to keep working as a carpenter, and consequently he did not get along well in that job.<sup>104</sup>

Military life suited him, so he joined the Canadian armed forces and was stationed in London, Ontario. He and Riny, with baby Tony, moved to Stratford. Their second child, Henry (Harry), was born there in 1955. They then moved to London where Margaret was born in 1956. Their fourth child, Darlene, was adopted in 1966.

Willem served in the military for 15 years and remained a private in rank. He was part of a paratroop group and was deeply disappointed when they said he was too old to jump out of planes anymore. He became part of the Pioneer Unit of the Royal Canadian Regiment which was used almost exclusively for parade and ceremonial functions. He was chosen for this role largely because of how fast he could grow a beard. He was lucky enough to meet Prince Phillip during one of the Queen's visits to Canada. He did a stint of peacekeeping in Cyprus and took part in military exercises in Alaska and Jamaica.<sup>105</sup>



*Willem in the Pioneer Unit, 2<sup>nd</sup> from the right.*

---

<sup>104</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

<sup>105</sup> As related by Willem's daughter, Margaret.

Later in 1953, a young midwife in the Netherlands, Corrie Dieleman, decided to take a vacation and visit her brother in Canada. He had a tobacco farm near Tillsonburg and went to the same church as John. One Sunday, Corrie's brother-in-law, who had driven her to church, thought it would be funny to leave her there, forcing her to find some other young man to drive her home. John was that man. Within a few months, she wrote her parents that she would not be coming back home, she was getting married instead. John and Corrie got married in April 1954. They lived in a small house on a tobacco farm in Vittoria near Tillsonburg.<sup>106</sup>



*John & Corrie, 7 April 1954.*



*Opa & Oma with John & Corrie, 7 April 1954.*

They moved several times during their first few years. Their oldest son, Henry (yet another Henry!) was born in 1955 in Simcoe. They flew back to Holland in 1956 so that John could meet Corrie's family in person, and to show off their son. Jane, their second child was born in Tillsonburg in 1957 while they were living in an apartment in Port Burwell.

John worked at various jobs until he was able to buy a farm and make it his full-time occupation. He worked in the tobacco fields, in the tobacco factory, hoeing fields in Leamington, and in construction at a gypsum plant in Beachville building a tower, which was a dangerous job. Finally in 1958, he was able to buy 20 acres near Vienna with a house, a garage, a small barn, a pigsty and an orchard. He bought it for \$3,000 and made payments of \$300/year until it was paid off. At the farm, he grew strawberries and kept bees. Corrie had to be extremely careful around the bees as she had a severe allergy to their stings. Their third child, Adrian, was born in 1960 while they lived there.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> As related by John's daughter, Jane.

<sup>107</sup> As related by John's daughter, Jane.



*John & Corrie, Vittoria, 1954.*



*John & Corrie's farm near Vienna, circa 1960.*

Jannes and Jansje's farm was getting established, although Jannes continued to work at the gypsum plant in Hagersville. By 1954, he was ready to buy a new tractor and took his 3-year-old son, Henry, with him to the implement dealers to look at them. Henry loved a big, shiny, red one and was bitterly disappointed when a small, ugly, gray one showed up at their farm the following week. He thought that if it was damaged his dad might take it back, so he cut up the rubber on the steering wheel. Unfortunately for Henry, the only result was that his backside got a little workout - and they kept the tractor.<sup>108</sup>

A few years later, Henry and little sister Nelda tried to go visit Tante Tryn. It was about 6 kilometers away and they set out down the road on their tricycles. When Jansje realized they weren't playing around the house as usual, she frantically started phoning the neighbours. She couldn't leave to look for them because she had baby Rita there and no car at home. Luckily, a neighbour spotted them and brought them back home.<sup>109</sup>

Little Henry was a curious lad and thought he would like to smoke a pipe like Opa, so he picked up Opa's pipe and started sucking on it. He turned white as a sheet and fainted, scaring everyone. Whether it was nicotine poisoning or an allergy they never knew, but fortunately, he revived after a few minutes and suffered no further ill effects.<sup>110</sup>

Opa frequently helped Jannes on the farm. Once he saved 6-year-old Nelda from a farm accident, keeping her from serious injury and potentially saving her life. Her foot had gotten tangled in some rope which was being used to hoist hay into the loft of the barn. Opa noticed, but before he could get Jannes's and her older brother, Henry's, attention to stop the machinery, she had been pinned against the ceiling with the rope cutting into her leg. Thankfully, they got her down with only a painful rope burn and no broken bones or worse.<sup>111</sup>

By 1958, Jannes sold the 50-acre farm and was able to buy a 100-acre farm in Varency near Jarvis, for \$14,000, right across the road from the Nykamps. It was mixed dairy, swine and poultry. He was also finally able to stop working at the gypsum plant and become a full-time farmer. He was constantly upgrading things on the farm, altering barns with extensive concrete work, buying better equipment, and more livestock.<sup>112</sup> Once he tried using his blasting experience from the gypsum mine to blow a hard crust off his manure pile. Unfortunately, it worked too well, and not only was the crust loosened but the barn got pelted with manure chunks.<sup>113</sup> His most famous failed experiment was trying to topple the neighbour's silo in one piece by landing it on a bed of straw, so he could use it for his new manure pit and save the cost of concrete. In the mid-1960's, Jannes also bought the farm next door which Henry ran as a pig farm while Jannes milked cows on the main farm. Later, Arnold also joined Jannes on the farm and Henry sold the pig farm.

---

<sup>108</sup> From a memoir written by Jannes' wife, Jansje.

<sup>109</sup> From a memoir written by Jannes' wife, Jansje.

<sup>110</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. and by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>111</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>112</sup> From Jannes' daughter, Nelda, and from Jansje's memoir.

<sup>113</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.



*Jannes' 100-acre farm in Varency near Jarvis.*

Jannes and Jansje's family loved music and singing. They sang in choirs and some of them played guitar, accordion, piano, and brass instruments. They also sang in the car, in the barn, and while doing dishes. One day when Jansje found the house too noisy, she sent the boys out to the barn to play their instruments there.<sup>114</sup>

Jannes was also active in the community and the church; he volunteered with the local Credit Union and on several church and school committees. In 1956, the Christian school in Jarvis opened its doors. Many of Opa and Oma's grandchildren, and later some of their great-grandchildren, went there including children of Jannes, Tryn, and Henry Jr. Their other grandchildren also attended Christian schools in their own communities.

---

<sup>114</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.



*Jarvis District Christian School, 1967.*

The Christian Reformed Church was expanding rapidly with all the new immigrants from the Netherlands. From the congregation in Jarvis, two daughter churches were formed, one in York and one in Simcoe. Opa and Oma, and Henry and Lena, were founding members of the new congregation in Simcoe.

The Christian Reformed Church, as an organization, took its responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the newcomers seriously. The CRC send 'fieldmen' to the Netherlands to recruit immigrants and to give them information. *De Gid*, a guide to areas served by established CRC congregations was distributed. These fieldmen also helped immigrants find sponsors. New immigrants were given information about CRC churches in their areas, and those congregations were given information about which immigrants would be coming.<sup>115</sup>

In 1956, Henry and Lena decided it was time. They had been going out since New Years Day in 1953, but they wanted to wait until they were 20 before getting married. They were wed in October, shortly after their 20<sup>th</sup> birthdays, still in Jarvis. Shortly after that, they went to church in Simcoe.

---

<sup>115</sup> From book: *To All My Children, the Story of Postwar Dutch Immigration to Canada*, by Albert VanderMey.



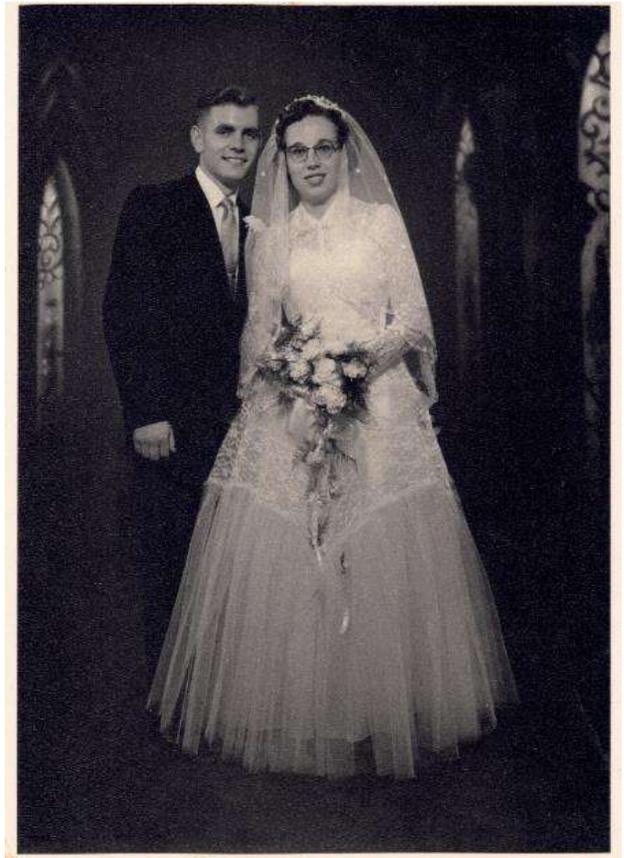
*Henry, circa 1954.*



*Lena, circa 1954.*



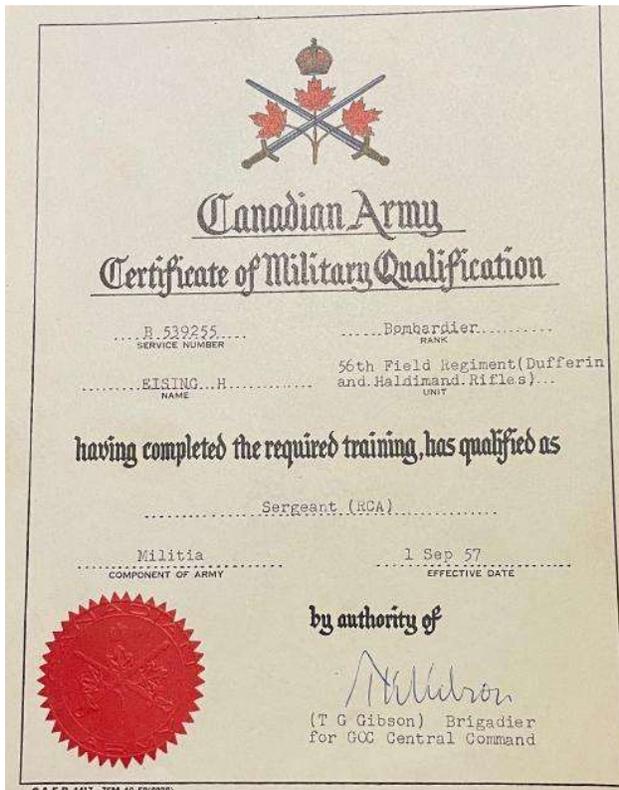
*Henry & Lena's engagement party, 1955.*



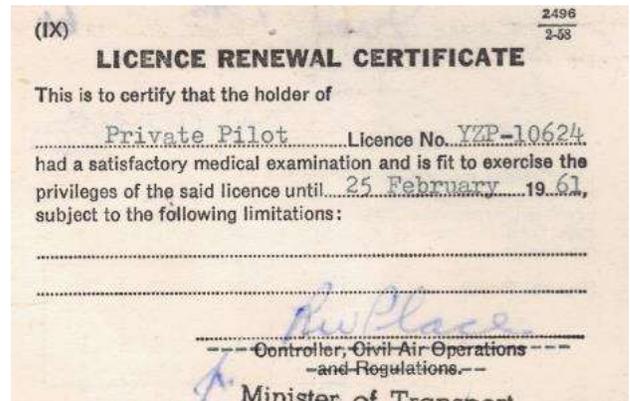
*Henry & Lena, 20 October 1956.*

In 1954, Henry joined the local militia and trained as a gun sergeant. He got his driver's permit from the Department of National Defence and stayed in the militia until at least 1957. He relates a story about going for artillery training near Meaford and hearing a story about one of the units accidentally blowing up a farmer's cow. He also got his chauffeur's licence in 1955, and he got a safe driving award from J.B. Jackson, the grocery wholesaler where he worked. In 1955, he had a membership in the Young Calvinist Society, the youth organization of the CRC church. In 1959, he got his private pilot's licence and kept it until at least 1967. He occasionally flew over Jannes' farm and the Nykamp farm, and the kids were quite excited waving to Uncle Henry in an airplane overhead.<sup>116</sup>

Shortly before getting married, Henry went to work for a furniture store in Simcoe, while Lena worked as a switch board operator at the hospital. They lived in an apartment on Stanley Street in Simcoe until their first child, Judy, was born in 1958. When Lena's parents bought a house just outside Simcoe, they moved in with them while they built their first house across the road. After the birth of their second child, Sandy, in 1959, they moved into their new house. Henry built a small greenhouse in the backyard and started growing tomato plants.



Henry becomes a Sergeant in the militia.



Henry gets his private pilot's license.

<sup>116</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024, and by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

In the fall of 1965, they moved to a 5-acre property in Renton, near Simcoe, which had a greenhouse. One reason Henry found this place attractive was that it was on the Christian school bus route. Henry grew tomatoes and gradually expanded the business. He still worked at the furniture store until the early 1970's when the business was big enough to support the family. Lena worked in the business, too, as well as at a fabric store, and they expanded the business to include cucumbers and bedding plants. They also fostered newborn babies. In 1967, Lisa came into the family as a five-day old infant, and they later adopted her. Henry Jr. was born in 1970.

A big milestone in 1960 was Opa and Oma's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was held in the church hall in Simcoe.



*Opa & Oma, circa 1960.*



*Opa & Oma, circa 1960.*

Opa was very proud of his prolific family. There is a story that he was really pleased that all six of his daughters and daughters-in-law were pregnant at the same time. This story seems to have grown over time as they could not all have been pregnant simultaneously, but the girls closest in age were: Margaret (Willem) born in 1956, Jane (John) born in 1957, Teresa (Tryn) born in 1957, Judy (Henry), born in 1958, Melinda (Jannes) born in 1958, and Irene (Aly) born in 1958.



*Opa & Oma's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1960.*

*Back L-R: John Eising, John Nykamp, Willem Eising, Leo Vis, Anton Vis, Jannes Eising, Henry Eising.*

*Middle L-R: Henry Eising (John), Corrie Dieleman Eising, Jane Eising (John), Tryn Eising Nykamp, Riny van Vliet Eising, Margaret Eising (Willem), Hendrik Eising, Hendrikien Boxen Eising, Judy Eising (Henry), Aly Eising Vis, Irene Vis, Jansje Mulder Eising, Melinda Eising (Jannes), Lena Hofland Eising, Sandy Eising (Henry), Arnold Eising (Jannes).*

*Front L-R: Henny Vis, Tryny Vis, Henny Nykamp, Tony Eising (Willem), Harry Eising (Willem), Bob Vis, Alice Nykamp, Joyce Nykamp, Rita Eising (Jannes), Nelda Eising (Jannes), Henry Eising (Jannes).*

A few years after moving to London, Willem built a house in the country just north of the city. The kids spent their days searching for the perfect apple tree and skipping over the creek on stepping stones. A loud whistle would pierce the air as their dad called them home to dinner. Their home became an emergency foster home for the Children's Aid Society.

In 1961, they moved back to London so they could go to the new Christian school. They had to take two city buses back and forth each day. In the summer, Riny would often pack a picnic lunch and take the kids to parks with outdoor pools for the day. During the school year, they had activities like swimming lessons and bowling at the military base's recreation centre.

In 1966, Darlene arrived as a one-day old newborn. When Willem had the opportunity to go to Germany for three years, they adopted her even though families with four children weren't usually allowed to go, but the army eventually relented. In Germany, Willem converted a Volkswagen van to

a camper, and they travelled from Germany to Barcelona and camped on the beach. They also travelled a lot around Holland and were able to reconnect with family. When Willem retired from the military, he stayed in London and became a general carpenter.<sup>117</sup>

In Simcoe, Opa, Oma, and Henry Jr. had moved from Highway 24 to a rented house on Talbot Street, and in the late 1950's or early 1960's, Opa and Oma bought a house on the corner of Maple and Metcalf Streets. By then, Henry was married and on his own. Opa fixed up an apartment on the second floor and rented it for extra income. Opa also helped some other immigrants renovate apartments in their houses.<sup>118</sup>

This house was walking distance to church and to shopping. When walking past the Canadian Can in Simcoe with a grandchild, Oma would proudly say that Opa had worked there.<sup>119</sup> It was also only a few blocks from the duck pond and many grandchildren remember feeding the ducks breadcrusts. The house smelled like Opa's ever-present pipe and there was a big bowl of cigar bands on the hutch. The bathroom was cold in the winter, and it was also a little bit spooky for the younger grandchildren. There was a big garden and raspberry patch in the back yard, and a tool shed in which Opa kept his tools meticulously cleaned and sharpened. (He used to shake his head at the disarray with Henry Jr's tools when he helped at the greenhouse.)



*Oma and Opa at Maple Street, circa 1963.*

---

<sup>117</sup> As related by Willem's daughter, Margaret.

<sup>118</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>119</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.



*Oma and Opa with Sandy & Judy at Henry & Lena's new house, 1963.*

## **The Twilight Years**

Oma and Opa often had grandchildren over to visit or to stay for awhile. Once Henny (Aly) and Nelda (Jannes) stayed for a few days during the summer. Henny tried to teach Nelda to ride Opa's bike, without Opa's permission, and Nelda almost got run over when she fell in the street. They tried to sneak back in the house, but Opa had seen the whole thing and was not happy with them.<sup>120</sup>

Another time, Nelda and Arnold (Jannes) also spent three weeks there when their mom was away, and they remember the noisy train keeping them awake at night. They also remember Oma letting down her long, braided hair from the bun she always wore and being amazed at the waves in it. Oma and Opa called each other *Va* and *Moe*, and Oma would get a shy smile when Opa teased her. Oma and Opa always had tins of delicious pineapple juice on hand and for a treat, tinned fruit cocktail. It was very special if you got the bowl with the cherry in it. Oma steamed day-old honey-glazed donuts and made tasty buttermilk porridge. And there was always a peppermint tin available in the pantry. Opa loved roughhousing with his grandchildren, bouncing them jovially on his knee. Unfortunately, Oma had frequent headaches and could often be seen with a medicinal leaf plastered to her forehead.<sup>121</sup>

---

<sup>120</sup> As related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>121</sup> Various memories from Jannes' daughter, Nelda, and Henry's daughter, Sandy.



*All the cousins at Opa & Oma's 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary, 1965.*

The grandchildren were growing up, and in 1967, Terry (Aly) became their first grandchild to get married. Terry married Arnie Jagt and later that same year, Opa and Oma saw their first great-grandchild, Shirley. Oma and Opa now had 25 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Opa would often spend time in prayer about his grandchildren. He loved them dearly and really wanted them to grow up 'in the Lord'.

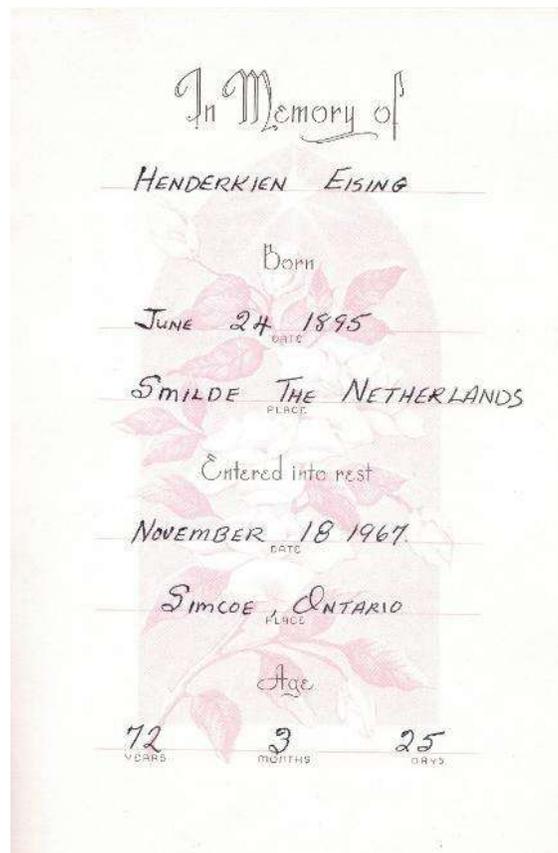


*Oma & Opa at the wedding of Terry Vis, their first grandchild to get married, 1967.*

In November 1967, Oma and Opa went grocery shopping one morning at a small store few blocks away. Oma started feeling unwell, so they went home. She laid down but had trouble getting her breath. Opa helped her sit up in bed to ease her breathing, but she was having a heart attack and died in his arms.

It was a sad time for Opa and the family. Little Sandy (Henry), age 7, remembers seeing Opa in church the Sunday after Oma's death, and him looking so very sad. Opa's faith and his grateful attitude sustained him. He said the Lord had given him the love of a good woman for 47 years; they had had a good life, and he was very thankful. We never heard him complain although he missed her terribly. He never again slept in the bed he had shared with her; for the rest of his life, he slept on a day bed/sofa in the living room.<sup>122</sup>

Henry Jr. was able to find Willem in Germany with the help of a good telephone operator who tracked down his regiment and connected them. Willem caught a military transport to Trenton, hitched a ride to Toronto, and Henry picked him up at the airport there.<sup>123</sup> The family came together to remember and bury their mother, and to praise the Lord for her life. Her body rests in Oakwood cemetery in Simcoe.



Oma, funeral card, 18 November 1967.

<sup>122</sup> Related by Jannes' daughter, Nelda.

<sup>123</sup> As related by Hendrik Jr. in interviews, 2024.

Life went on for Opa. He spent many afternoons at the greenhouse helping Henry Jr. with various chores. He loved to dig ditches, very straight ditches with perfectly vertical sides. He was well into his seventies, yet he would trim the willow trees, standing on a plank between two supports and reaching over his head with clippers. He would tip a wheelbarrow onto its handles and sit in the bucket to rest. Then after supper, Henry would bring him home and he would spend the evenings playing chess or checkers against himself, or sometimes a chess player from church would drop by and play with him. On Sunday afternoons, Henry often played a few games of chess with him while they had their afternoon tea. In the early '70's, he got a television set, too.<sup>124</sup>

Sometimes grandchildren would stop by to visit him when they went shopping in Simcoe. He also spent time at his other children's houses, helping Jannes or John on their farms, or just visiting with them. He and Anton loved to sit and smoke their cigars. At the occasional family picnic, he and Anton could be seen dressed in their shiny Sunday suits, sitting in lawn chairs in the shade, cigars in hand.<sup>125</sup>



*Opa with Henry's son, Henry Jr., Anton, Aly, & Willem at Aly & Anton's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1972.*

---

<sup>124</sup> Memories from Henry's daughter, Sandy.

<sup>125</sup> Memories from Henry's daughter, Sandy.

There was a family reunion in the early 1970's when Willem was back from Germany which was held at Henry Jr.'s greenhouse property. There was a game with a plank perched between two sawhorses that two players would stand on and try to knock each other off with pillows. There was also a soccer game and a potluck supper. Family reunions continued occasionally after that with one family or another hosting it at a nearby park.<sup>126</sup>

In 1968, Tryn and John sold the farm near Jarvis across from Jannes. They had lived there since getting married in 1952 and had purchased it in 1961; all their children had been born while living there. Henny remembers seeing the new Canadian flag raised at the Christian School in Jarvis on a cold day in 1967. They bought a farm in Clinton where they raised dairy cows and later pigs, but because of an old back injury from the gypsum mine in Hagersville, John had to limit his heavy work and transitioned into beekeeping.<sup>127</sup>

The families continued to grow. Aly and Anton's son Leo married Liz Verschoor in 1968, and they had a baby, Lisa, later that year. Their next two children were Leonard born in 1971, and Anthony born in 1977.

Aly and Anton's daughter, Henny, married Harm Medema, also in 1968. They had baby Jeff in 1969, Yvonne in 1971, Danielle in 1973, and Naomi in 1974.

Aly and Anton's daughter, Terry, and her husband had more children: Tammy in 1970, Terry-Anne in 1973, and Tanya in 1976.

In 1970, Henry and Lena had their fourth child, Henry Jr (the last of the many Henrys).

In 1973, Tryn and John had their first grandchild when Henny had her first child, Donovan. She married Hans Uyl in 1974, and they had Deanna in 1975, and Rachel in 1977.

Jannes and Jansje's daughter, Rita, married Len Kostaluk in 1975. Their son Wesley was born in 1977.

Jannes and Jansje's son Henry married Maria Voorsluis in 1976. They had Angela in 1976 and Jacqueline in 1978.

Also in 1976, Jannes and Jansje's daughter, Nelda, married Matt Renkema.

Jannes and Jansje's daughter, Melinda, married John Snider in 1977, and they had their first daughter, Heather in 1978.

John and Corrie's daughter, Jane, married Len Weverink in 1977, and they had their first child, Ingrid, in 1978.

Willem's son, Tony, married Marcey in 1978, and they had a son, Jason, the same year.

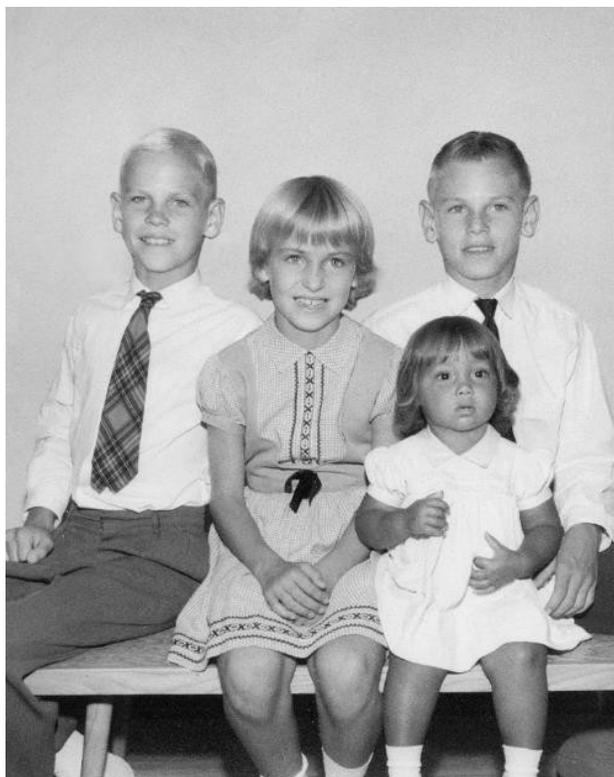
---

<sup>126</sup> Memories from Henry's daughter, Sandy.

<sup>127</sup> As related by Tryn's daughter, Henny.



*Willem's family, 1957. Back L-R: Willem, Margaret, Riny. Front L-R: Tony, Harry.*



*Willem's children, 1965. L-R: Harry, Margaret, Darlene, Tony.*



*Jannes' family, circa 1961. Back L-R: Henry, Nelda. Middle L-R: Jannes, Jansje. Front L-R: Arnold, Rita, Melinda.*



*Jannes' family, circa 1971. L-R: Melinda, Arnold, Jannes, Rita, Jansje, Henry, Nelda.*



*Aly's family, circa 1963. Standing L-R: Leo, Anton, Bob. Front L-R: Henny, Aly, Irene, Terry.*



*Tryn's family, circa 1961. L-R: Tryn with Trudy, Alice, Joyce, Henny, John with Teresa.*



*John's family, 1962. Back L-R: John, Adrian, Corrie. Front L-R: Jane, Henry.*



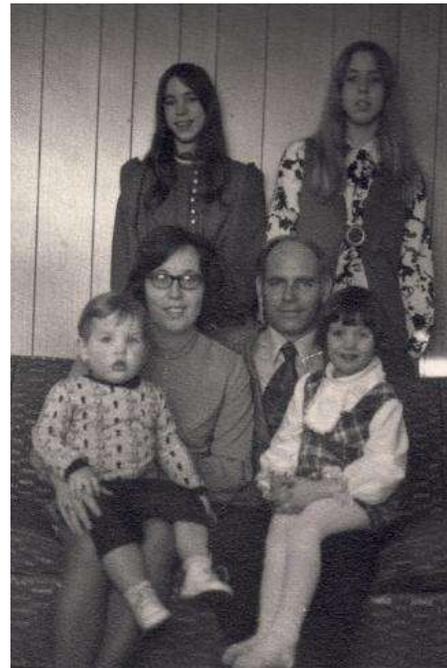
*John's family, 1974. Back L-R: Adrian, Henry, John. Front L-R: Jane, Corrie.*



*Henry's family, 1966. L-R: Sandy, Henry, Lena, Judy.*



*Henry's family, 1970. Back: L-R: Judy, Sandy. Front: Henry Jr., Lisa.*



*Henry's family, 1971. Standing: L-R: Sandy, Judy. Sitting L-R: Henry Jr., Lena, Henry, Lisa.*



*Opa at his house on the corner of Maple and Metcalfe Streets in Simcoe, 1973.*

On 2 November 1978, Opa was visiting Aly and Anton in Fruitland. His years of pipe and cigar smoking was catching up with him and he struggled with emphysema. While he was there, it got much worse, and they brought him to the hospital. They tracked down Henry, who was at a business dinner in Toronto, and he rushed to the hospital in Hamilton, getting there in the early evening. Opa's heart gave out and he died shortly after Henry got there.

Opa had lived a long, full, and eventful life, surviving two world wars, the depression, and immigration. His faith had sustained him through all of it. The Lord had certainly been good to him giving him a loving wife for 47 years, 6 children, 26 grandchildren, and 20 great-grandchildren. He had farmed at five different locations in Holland, and three in Canada. During the war, he had shown his bravery in the *underground* in Holland and was a good citizen in both countries he lived in. His children had all followed in his footsteps, being actively involved in the Christian Reformed Church, and his grandchildren had all attended Christian schools, at least for a time. His funeral service, while sad, reflected his faith and the goodness of God. He was laid to rest beside Oma at Oakwood Cemetery in Simcoe.

The Twenty-Third Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
He leadeth me beside the still waters:  
He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the  
paths of righteousness for His name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of death, I will fear no evil:  
for thou art with me; thy rod and  
thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the  
presence of mine enemies:  
thou anointest my head with oil;  
my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow  
me all the days of my life:  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.



**IN MEMORY OF**  
**HENDRIK EISING**  
183 Maple Street, Simcoe, Ontario

**DATE OF BIRTH**  
June 27, 1895  
Netherlands

**DATE OF DEATH**  
Thursday, November 2, 1978  
Henderson Hospital, Hamilton

**RESTING AT**  
**BALDOCK FUNERAL HOME**  
96 Norfolk Street N., Simcoe, Ontario

**SERVICES FROM**  
Christian Reformed Church  
Monday, November 6, 1978  
at 2:00 p.m.

**OFFICIATING**  
Rev. Rolf Fluit

**INTERMENT**  
Oakwood Cemetery

*Opa's funeral card, 2 November 1978.*

EISING, Hendrik — of 183 Maple Street, Simcoe, passed away suddenly at Henderson Hospital, Hamilton, on Thursday, November 2nd, 1978 in his 84th year. Beloved husband of the late Henderkien Eising (1967). Dear father of Willem of London, Ontario, John of R.R. 2 Vienna, Jannes of Jarvis, Henry of R.R. 5 Simcoe, Mrs. Anthony Vis (Alice) of Fruitland, Ontario. Mrs. John Nykamp (Tryn) of Clinton, Ontario. Also surviving are 26 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren. Mr. Eising is resting at the Baldock Funeral Home. Funeral service will be held from the Christian Reformed Church on Monday, November 6th at 2 p.m. Officiating Rev. Ralph Fluit. Interment Oakwood Cemetery.

*From The Simcoe Reformer, November 1978.*

## Postscript

A week or two after Opa's passing, Henry was picking up the mail at the house on Maple Street. A letter came from an old acquaintance, Klomp, in Beusichem, who wanted to let Opa know about happenings at his old farm, 'De Breedendam', the farm he had been cheated out of, which had prompted his immigration. There had been a fire, and the house was destroyed. It had happened within hours of Opa's death! And it was learned later that the people who owned it were members of the same family who had denied him the farm. Such unfathomable coincidence. Or was it?

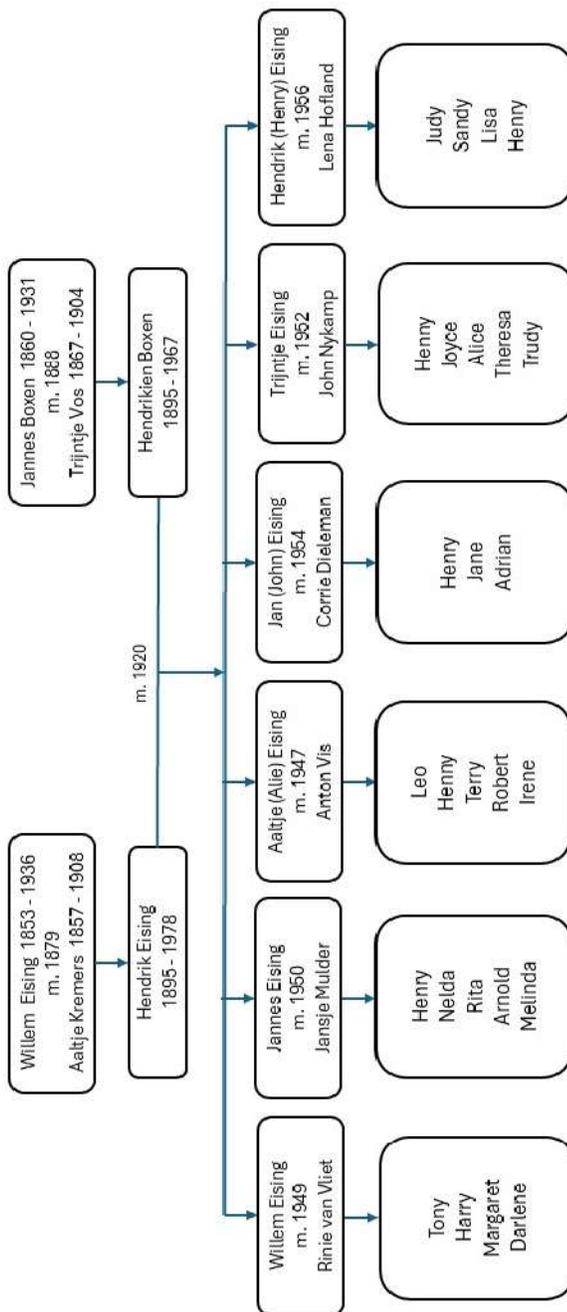


*Headline: Breedendam largely destroyed by fire. From the Culemborgsche Courant 9 November 1978.*

See Appendix 5 for more detail.

## Appendix 1: Family Tree

### Eising Boxen Descendants



## Appendix 2: Grandchildren & Great Grandchildren

*26 Grandchildren & 20 Great Grandchildren by November 2, 1978*

### Grandchildren

1948 – Leo (Aly)  
1950 – Henny (Ay)  
1951 – Henry (Jannes)  
1951 – Terry (Aly)  
1952 – Nelda (Jannes)  
1953 – Henny (Tryn)  
1953 – Tony (Willem)  
1953 – Rita (Jannes)  
1954 – Bob (Aly)  
1954 – Joyce (Tryn)  
1955 – Harry (Willem)  
1955 – Henry (John)  
1955 – Arnold (Jannes)  
1956 - Margaret (Willem)  
1956 – Alice (Tryn)  
1957 – Jane (John)  
1957 - Teresa (Tryn)  
1958 – Judy (Henry)  
1958 – Melinda (Jannes)  
1958 – Irene (Aly)  
1959 – Sandy (Henry)  
1960 – Adrian (John)  
1961 – Trudy (Tryn)  
1966 – Darlene (Willem)  
1967 – Lisa (Henry)  
1970 – Henry (Henry)

### Great Grandchildren

1967 – Shirley (Terry, Aly)  
1968 – Lisa (Leo, Aly)  
1969 – Jeff (Henny, Aly)  
1970 – Tammy (Terry, Aly)  
1971 – Leonard (Leo, Aly)  
1971 – Yvonne (Henny, Aly)  
1973 – Terri-Anne (Terry, Aly)  
1973 – Donovan (Henny, Tryn)  
1973 – Danielle (Henny, Aly)  
1974 – Naomi (Henny, Aly)  
1975 – Deanne (Henny, Tryn)  
1976 – Tanya (Terry, Aly)  
1976 – Angela (Henry, Jannes)  
1977 – Rachel (Henny, Tryn)  
1977 – Anthony (Leo, Aly)  
1977 – Wesley (Rita, Jannes)  
1978 – Heather (Melinda, Jannes)  
1978 – Ingrid (Jane, John)  
1978 – Jacqueline (Henry, Jannes)  
1978 – Jason (Tony, Willem)

### Appendix 3: Maps



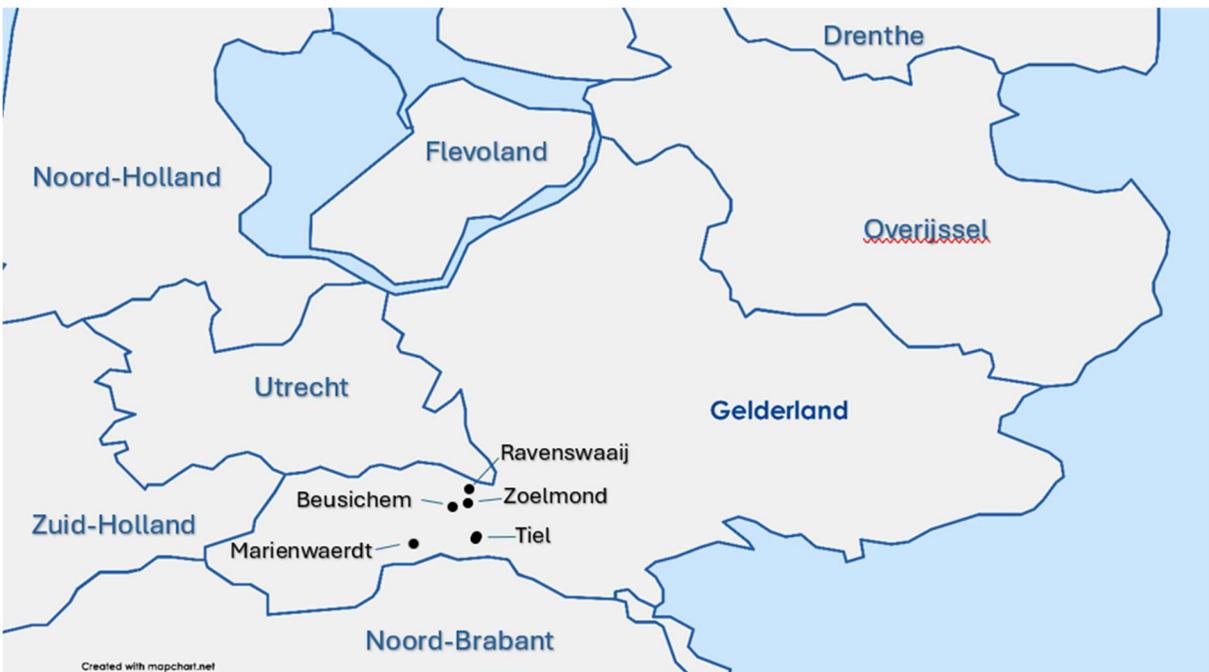
*Europe & the Netherlands.*



*The Provinces of the Netherlands.*



*Locations where the family lived in Drenthe.*



*Locations where the family lived or visited in Gelderland.*



*Locations where the family lived in Southern Ontario.*

## Appendix 4: Timeline

- 1853 - Willem Eising (Opa's father) born in Meppen
- 1857 - Aaltje Kremers (Opa's mother) born in Meppen
- 1860 - Jannes Boxen (Oma's father) born in Smilde
- 1867 - Trijntje Vos (Oma's mother) born in Bovensmilde
- 1879 - Willem Eising & Aaltje Kremers marry
- 1888 - Jannes Boxen & Trijntje Vos marry
- 1895 - Hendriken Boxen born in Bovensmilde
- 1895 - Hendrik Eising born in Meppen
- 1904 – Trijntje Vos Boxen (Oma's mother) dies
- 1908 – Aaltje Kremers Eising (Opa's mother) dies
- 1909 – Jannes Boxen marries Albertien Hoving
- 1910 – Arend Boxen (Oma's half-brother) born in Hoogesmilde
- 1920 – Hendrik Eising & Hendriken Boxen marry, Hendrik works as a farm hand in Odoorn
- 1921 – Willem Eising born in Odoornerveen
- 1922 – Jannes Eising born in Odoornerveen
  - The family moves to Meppen & starts chicken hatchery
- 1926 – Aaltje Eising born in Meppen
- 1928 – Jan Eising born in Meppen
- 1930 – Trijntje Eising born in Meppen
- 1931 – Jannes Boxen (Oma's father) dies
- 1936 – Willem Eising (Opa's father) dies
- 1934 – they lose the hatchery in Meppen, move to Hoogeveen
- 1936 – Hendrik Eising Jr. born in Hoogeveen
- 1938 – family moves to Beusichem, *De Breedendam*
- 1939 – WWII starts
- 1940 – Germany invades the Netherlands
- 1940 - Jannes get a diploma in fruit growing in Tiel
- 1940 to '45? – Anton hides as an *onderduiker* in Meppen

1943 or '44 – Jannes breaks his leg twice

1944 – help evacuate hospital in Tiel

1944 - Jannes bikes to pick up supplies

1945/46/47 – Aaltje works for Oom Jan to take care of his elderly mother-in-law, Oma Koops

1945 – Jannes gets a certificate from Fruitteeltschool in Geldermalsen

1945 – Canada liberates the Netherlands

1945 – Germans march through town to go back to Germany

1946 – family moves to Zoelmond

1946 – Willem writes Hendrik a letter to Zoelmond from Indonesia

1946 or '47 – Hendrik steps on embroidery needle, has surgery in Tiel

1946 – Hendrik visits Aaltje in summer for 2 weeks in Meppen

1947 – Aaltje marries Anton Vis, live in Hooghalen at Westerbork, Anton works as cook

1947, '48 summers – Hendrik visits Aaltje in Westerbork for 2 weeks each summer

1948 – Willem returns from Indonesia, looks up Riny, wrote letters together

1948 May – Jan & Jannes immigrate, work at cheese factory in Kintore, and maybe some farms

1948 – story about Jannes & skunk, story about ice water in boots

1948 – Jannes buys his first car, a '36 Chevy

1948 – Jannes attends Ingersoll church, sees photo of Jansje, writes Jansje in July '48

1948 July – Aaltje & Anton have first baby, Leo, at Westerbork

1948 later in year – Jansje meets Aaltje & Hendriken at Westerbork

1948 November – Albertien Hoving dies

1949 – Jansje goes to Zoelmond to meet family

1949 – Jannes and Jan move to Woodstock briefly, then Jannes went to Burlington fruit farm

1949 March – Hendrik, Hendriken, Trijntje & Hendrik Jr. immigrate, Willem sees them off

1949 spring/summer – they work on fruit farm in Burlington with Jannes for 4 months

1949 July – Jannes goes to work at gypsum mine, boards in Hagersville

July 1949 – the family moves to Ancaster, stay for about 1.5 years, Jan lives there, too, rents land down the road (probably summer of 1950), sometimes sang hymns together in the evening

- Henry rides bike to catechism at First CRC, Hamilton

- Henry goes to boy scouts, goes to school in Ancaster

1949 September - Willem & Riny get married in the Netherlands

1949 October- Jansje immigrates, Jannes picks her up, she stays with his parents in Ancaster

1950 January – Jannes & Jansje get married at First CRC, in Hamilton, rent a house near Hagersville

1950 January – Aaltje & Anton have 2<sup>nd</sup> baby Henny in Assen

1950 – John rents land down the road from family for tomatoes & beans, sold at market

- John had a '46 Chevy and traded it for a truck for the vegetable marketing

1950 or '51 – Tryn meets John Nykamp at a youth event in Ancaster

1950 summer – Aly & Anton immigrate with 2 yr old Leo and baby Henny, stay with family in Ancaster

1950 late summer, early fall? - Jan works at psych hospital for a couple of months

1950/51 winter – Jan goes logging in Cochrane, stays one winter, then possibly on a tobacco farm near Kitchener by mid-1951

1950 late summer – family moves to Jarvis, stayed with Jannes for a few weeks first, Aly & kids go with them, Anton lives & works in Hamilton during the week

1951 – Tryn finds work at canning factory in Simcoe, Opa maybe, too, or may have been later

1951 – Jannes & Jansje have first baby, Henry, in Hagersville

1951 July – Jannes buys 50-acre farm on Conc 4 near Jarvis/Sandusk

1951 June – Aly & Anton have 3<sup>rd</sup> baby, Terry, in Hagersville, Henry Jr drove her there (at age 14!)

1952 February – Henry gets licence at age 15, drives truck to downtown Hamilton as soon as he turns 16

1952 April – Lena immigrates with family aboard the Sibajak, same ship as Willem & Riny

1952 April – Willem & Riny immigrate, live for short time with Jannes & Jansje

1952 May – Tryn & John get married, at some point before 1955, rented farm near Jarvis, across from Jannes future farm

1952 summer – Henry starts work for J B Jackson

1952 – Jannes & Jansje have 2<sup>nd</sup> baby, Nelda, in Hagersville

1953 – Tryn & John have first baby, Henny, in Hagersville

1953 – Willem & Riny have first baby, Tony, in Hagersville, Henry Jr drove her there

1953 – Opa, Oma, & Henry move to Hwy 24 in Simcoe, Willem & Riny rent apt in Simcoe

- Willem & Riny move to Stratford sometime before 1956
- 1953 – Jannes & Jansje have 3<sup>rd</sup> baby, Rita, in Hagersville
- 1954 early – Corrie visits brother in Aylmer, (could have been 1952 or '53?), gets ditched at church & John gives her a ride
- 1954 April – John & Corrie get married, live in a small house on a tobacco farm near Tillsonburg
- 1954 – Jannes buys a tractor, little 3-year-old Henry wants a shiny new red one
  - Henry & Nelda try to tricycle to Tryn's
- 1954 – Aly & Anton have 4<sup>th</sup> baby, Bob, in Hagersville
- 1954 – Tryn & John have 2<sup>nd</sup> baby, Joyce, in Hagersville
- 1953 – '55? – Willem joins military & moves to Stratford, based in London
- 1953 New Years Day – Henry meets Lena at skating at arena in Simcoe
- 1955 – John & Corrie have first baby, Henry, in Simcoe
- 1955 – Willem & Riny have 2<sup>nd</sup> baby, Harry, in Stratford
- 1955 – Jannes & Jansje have 4<sup>th</sup> baby, Arnold, in Hagersville
- 1956 – January, Corrie, & baby Henry fly to Holland for a visit
- 1956 – Willem & Riny move from Stratford to London
- 1956 – Willem & Riny have 3<sup>rd</sup> baby, Margaret, in London
- 1956 – Jarvis Christian school opens, Jannes Eising, Henry Eising & Nykamp kids would all go there
- 1956 – Tryn & John have 3<sup>rd</sup> baby, Alice
- 1956 September – Henry & Lena get married
- 1957 – John & Corrie have 2<sup>nd</sup> baby, Jane, in Tillsonburg, live in apt in Port Burwell
- 1958 – John & Corrie buy farm
- 1957 – John & Corrie have 2<sup>nd</sup> baby, Jane
- 1957 – Tryn & John have 4<sup>th</sup> baby, Teresa
- 1958 – Henry & Lena have 1<sup>st</sup> baby, Judy, in Simcoe
- 1958 – Aly & Anton have 5<sup>th</sup> baby, Irene, in Hamilton
- 1958 – Jannes & Jansje have 5<sup>th</sup> baby, Melinda, in Hagersville
- 1958 or '59 – Willem builds a house north of London
- 1958 – Jannes sells farm near Sandusk & buys 100 acres near Jarvis across from Nykamps

1958 – Opa so proud of all the babies & his prolific family

Late 1950's or early 1960's – Opa & Oma buy house on Maple Street

1959 – Henry & Lena have 2<sup>nd</sup> baby, Sandy, in Simcoe

1959 – Henry & Lena build their first house. Henry works at furniture store

1960 – John & Corrie have 3<sup>rd</sup> baby, Adrian, in Tillsonburg

1961 – Tyrn & John buy the farm, were already renting it

1961 – Tryn & John have 5<sup>th</sup> baby, Trudy

1961 – Willem moves family back to London to go to new Christian School

1964 – Willem & Riny adopt Darlene, go to Germany for 3 years

1965 – Jannes buys farm next door to Nykamps

1965 or '66 – Henry & Lena buy 5-acre property with greenhouse

1966 – Willem & Riny receive 4th baby, Darlene, in London, adopt her later

1967 – Henry & Lena receive 3<sup>rd</sup> baby, Lisa, in Simcoe, adopt her later

1967 November – Oma dies

1967 – 1978 – Hendrik spends many afternoons at greenhouse with Henry & Lena's family, also helping Jannes on the farm, and Jan as well

1967 – first grandchild marries, Terry (Aly) marries Arnie

1968 – Willem moves back to London (possibly later)

- Becomes general carpenter after retiring from military

1967 – Aly has 1<sup>st</sup> grandchild, Shirley (Terry & Arnie, 1<sup>st</sup>)

1968 – Tryn & John sell the farm the farm in Jarvis & buy the farm in Clinton

1968 – Leo (Aly) marries Liz

1968 – Aly has 2<sup>nd</sup> grandchild, Lisa (Leo & Liz, 1<sup>st</sup>)

1968 - Henny (Aly) marries Harm

1969 – Aly has 3<sup>rd</sup> grandchild, Jeff (Henny & Harm, 1<sup>st</sup>)

1970 – Aly has 4<sup>th</sup> grandchild, Tammy (Terry & Arnie, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

1970 – Henry & Lena have 4th baby, Henry, in Simcoe

1971 – Aly has 5<sup>th</sup> grandchild, Leonard (Leo & Liz, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

1971 – Aly has 6<sup>th</sup> grandchild, Yvonne (Henny & Harm, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

1973 – Aly has 7<sup>th</sup> grandchild, Terri-Anne (Terry & Arnie, 3<sup>rd</sup>)

1973 – Aly has 8<sup>th</sup> grandchild, Danielle (Henny & Harm, 3<sup>rd</sup>)

1973 – Tryn has 1<sup>st</sup> grandchild, Donovan (Henny, 1<sup>st</sup>)

1974 – Aly has 9<sup>th</sup> grandchild, Naomi (Henny & Harm, 4<sup>th</sup>)

1974 – Henny (Tryn) marries Hans

1975- Rita (Jannes) marries Len

1975 – Tryn has 2<sup>nd</sup> grandchild, Deanne (Henny & Hans, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

1976 – Henry (Jannes) marries Maria

1976 – Nelda (Jannes) marries Matt

1976 – Jannes has 1<sup>st</sup> grandchild, Angela (Henry & Maria, 1<sup>st</sup>)

1976 – Aly has 10<sup>th</sup> grandchild, Tanya (Terry & Arnie, 4<sup>th</sup>)

1977 – Aly has 11<sup>th</sup> grandchild, Anthony (Leo & Liz, 3<sup>rd</sup>)

1977 – Tryn has 3<sup>rd</sup> grandchild, Rachel (Henny & Hans, 3<sup>rd</sup>)

1977 – Jane (John) marries Len

1977 – Melinda (Jannes) marries John

1977 – Jannes has 2<sup>nd</sup> grandchild, Wesley (Rita & Len, 1<sup>st</sup>)

1978 – Jannes has 3<sup>rd</sup> grandchild, Heather (Melinda & John, 1<sup>st</sup>)

1978 – Jannes has 4<sup>th</sup> grandchild, Jacqueline (Henry & Maria, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

1978 – John has 1<sup>st</sup> grandchild, Ingrid (Jane & Len, 1<sup>st</sup>)

1978 – Tony (Willem) marries Marcey

1978 – Willem has 1<sup>st</sup> grandchild, Jason (Tony & Marcey, 1<sup>st</sup>)

1978 November – Opa dies

1978 November - *De Breedendam* burns

## Appendix 5: De Breedendam Fire

Opa died on the evening of 2 November 1978 in Hamilton. We know the timing of this because his son, Henry, arrived at the hospital in the early evening, having been called away from a supper meeting, and Opa died shortly after he got there.

With the time difference between Hamilton, Ontario, and Beusichem, the Netherlands, Opa's death would have happened in the early morning hours of 3 November 1978, Netherlands time.

So how do we know that the house, *De Breedendam*, burned that night?

The Regional Archives of the Riverlands contains newspapers from the Beusichem area. In it, the *Culemborgsche Courant* from 9 November 1978, contains a folksy column of happenings in the area the previous week, called *Bulten Schrijft* (Bulten Writes). Bulten related a story about a fire at *De Breedendam*.



### Translation: **FIRE**

*Mr. J. L. van Deutekom was called away at the opening. Later it turned out that there was a big fire on Beusichem's 'Breedendam'. An old farm under monument protection. To the dismay of the residents, whose furniture suffered a lot of water damage or was lost. Damage at least f 250,000.*

*The Fire Department called in the assistance of Culemborg's Fire Department, who could reach the fire more easily with their long Magirus ladder. After three hours the fire was under control. All around sympathetic people.*

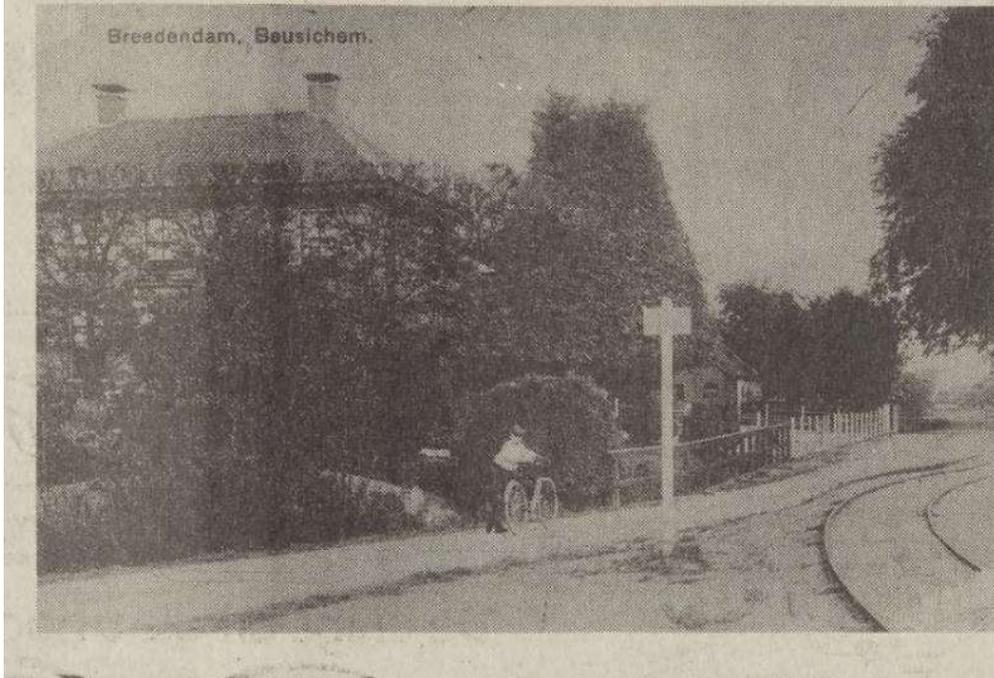
*Who will restore this beautiful building to its former glory? Monument protection and insurance together? I have no answer.*

*The residents were resigned. Saddened. They bore their great loss with dignity.*

*We only now realized what a beautiful spot was destroyed by fire.*

*Here we realized a photo from earlier days, when it was inhabited by the G Hol family around the turn of the century. Arie Nout with his bicycle. The tram is still there.*

# Breedendam grotendeels door brand verwoest



*Breedendam largely destroyed by fire. From the Culemborgsche Courant 9 November 1978.*

This column indicates a major fire at *Breedendam* but does not give the time or date. However, it does say in the first paragraph that a man was called away from an opening because of a fire at *Breedendam*. This opening was mentioned in the previous paragraph which talks about the grand opening of a business the previous Friday afternoon, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November. That places the fire sometime in the morning hours of that day.

When Henry picked up the mail at Opa's house, after his death, there was a letter from a friend of the family named Klomp telling him about the fire. He indicated that he had been up during the night and had seen a fire glow in the distance and found out the next day that it had been the fire at *De Breedendam*. That places the fire in the dark hours between the night of November 2<sup>nd</sup> and the morning of November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

So Opa died and *De Breedendam* burned within hours of each other.



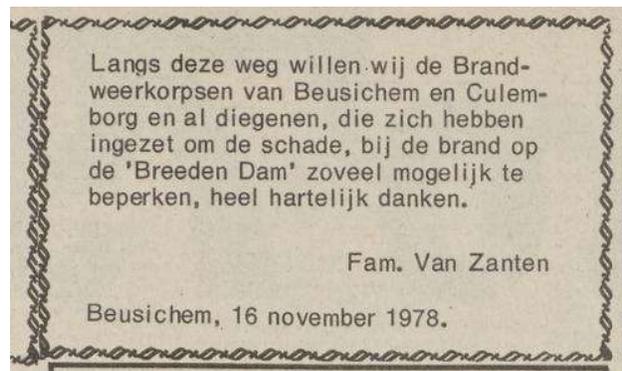
We have a few more details about the fire at *De Breedendam* from this column in The Nieuwe Tielsche Courant, November 7, 1978, page 3.



**Translation: Fire in Beusichem**

*At the end of last week, a fire broke out in the listed farm "De Breedendam". The roof was completely destroyed. Rooms suffered water damage. A large part of the contents were destroyed as a result. The fire brigade had difficulty reaching the fire because of the high roof. That is why the Culemborg fire brigade was called in to assist, who succeeded, equipped with a long Magirus ladder. The damage is estimated at f250,000. The fire was caused by a short circuit. After three hours, the fire was under control.*

The following ad is particularly interesting. It indicates that the family Van Zanten owned *De Breedendam* at the time of the fire. This is the same family who owned the farm when Hendrik Sr. was denied ownership at the conclusion of his rent-to-own agreement.



**Translation:**

*We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Fire Brigades of Beusichem and Culemborg and all those who have made an effort to limit the damage to the fire on the 'Breedendam' as much as possible.*

*Fam. Van Zanten*

*Beusichem, November 16, 1978.*

*From The Culemborgsche Courant, November 16, 1978, page 3.*

So Opa died and *De Breedendam* burned within hours of each other. And the house was still owned by the same family who had denied Opa the opportunity to fulfill his rent-to-own agreement and buy the property, which largely prompted his immigration. A weird symmetry there, and so very coincidental.

*De Breedendam* as it appeared in 2013, obviously having been rebuilt.



