

The many names of Harmen Janse Knickerbocker

Part 1:

Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen, and Harmen Janse Van Bommel

Bryan Knickerbocker, 02 January 2018

By the time he died, our ancestor was called Harmen Janse Knickerbocker.

However, earlier in his life, Harmen Janse used different extensions of his name. Many genealogists have spent years trying to decipher this information. There has been some excellent work in the past, which is greatly appreciated.

This report takes the search in a new direction.

We will discuss three ways that our ancestor described himself. The discussion is in reverse chronological order.

We will discuss Harmen Janse Knickerbocker “Van Dutchess County.” This is how our ancestor described himself in his will, which was written in 1708. There wasn’t any deep inner meaning associated with “Van Dutchess County.” That just happened to be where he was living.

We will briefly discuss Harmen “Boertie.” This is how our ancestor was described in a court case from 1784. Our ancestor’s use of “Boertie” apparently just referred to him being a farmer.

We will then discuss Harmen Janse “Van Bommel.” This is how our ancestor described himself in the 1680’s and 1690’s. This has been well known for more than 100 years. We will discuss the prior work, and provide some new details. These details are important to the story.

Then, in the final section, we will discuss Harmen Janse “Van Turkeyen.” This is how our ancestor was described in the late 1670’s. The “Van Turkeyen” connection is new information, at least to our knowledge.

There wasn’t any deep inner meaning to our ancestor’s use of “Van Turkeyen.” This just happened to be where he was living, in a long-forgotten Dutch settlement between the Cohoes Falls and the Hudson River. However, this represents an important lead.

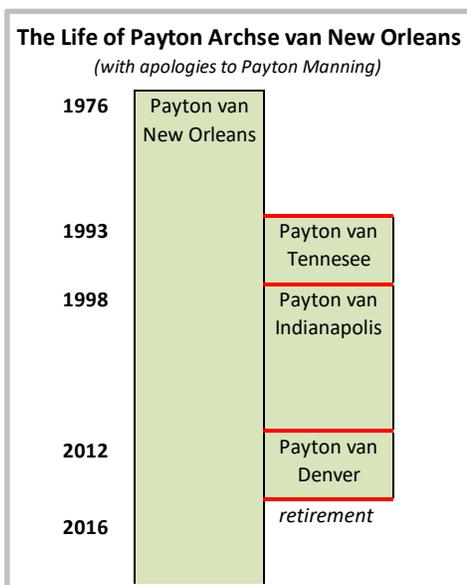
As we will discuss, it is possible that Rensselaer family was aware of our ancestor. Future research will focus on finding the man that the Rensselaer patrons knew only as Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen.

NOTE: This report shows many historic records. References are shown on the last page of the report.

Introduction

During colonial times, many Dutch settlers did not have last names. This was particularly true for those from the middle or lower classes. To further compound the problem, the Dutch were very flexible in their use of the word Van.

To illustrate the complications, we have created two examples that American readers will recognize.



First, consider an athlete named Payton. In formal situations, he would be called Payton Archsen, in honor of his father, Archie.

Payton was born in New Orleans.

In 1993, Payton moved to Tennessee to play college football. Later he moved to Indianapolis, and then to Denver.

At specific times in his life, he was Payton Van Tennessee, Payton Van Indianapolis, and Payton Van Denver. Each moniker applied to a clearly defined time period. For example, there was no overlap between the periods when he was “Payton Van Indianapolis” vs. “Payton Van Denver.”

Through all of this, his name and birthplace never changed. Even today, we could call him Payton Archsen Van New Orleans.

Now consider a more complex example: an athlete named Lew, who later changed his name to Kareem.

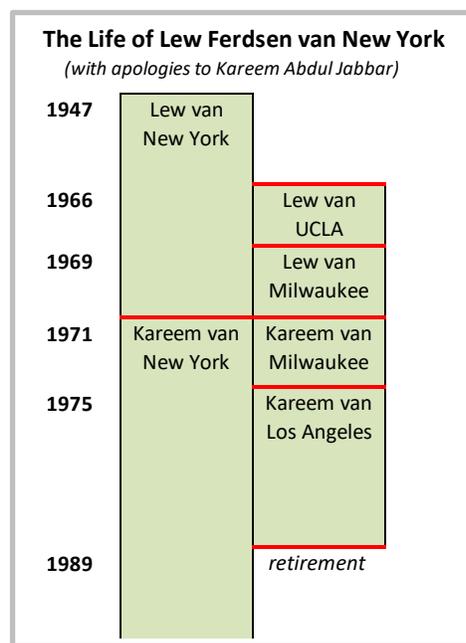
When he was young, he would have been called Lew Ferdsen in formal situations. This was in honor of his father Ferdinand.

Lew went to UCLA to play college basketball. He then moved to Milwaukee. There were distinct periods when he was Lew Van UCLA and then Lew Van Milwaukee.

In 1971, Lew changed his name to Kareem. He was still living in Milwaukee, so he was called Kareem Van Milwaukee. Later, he was Kareem Van Los Angeles.

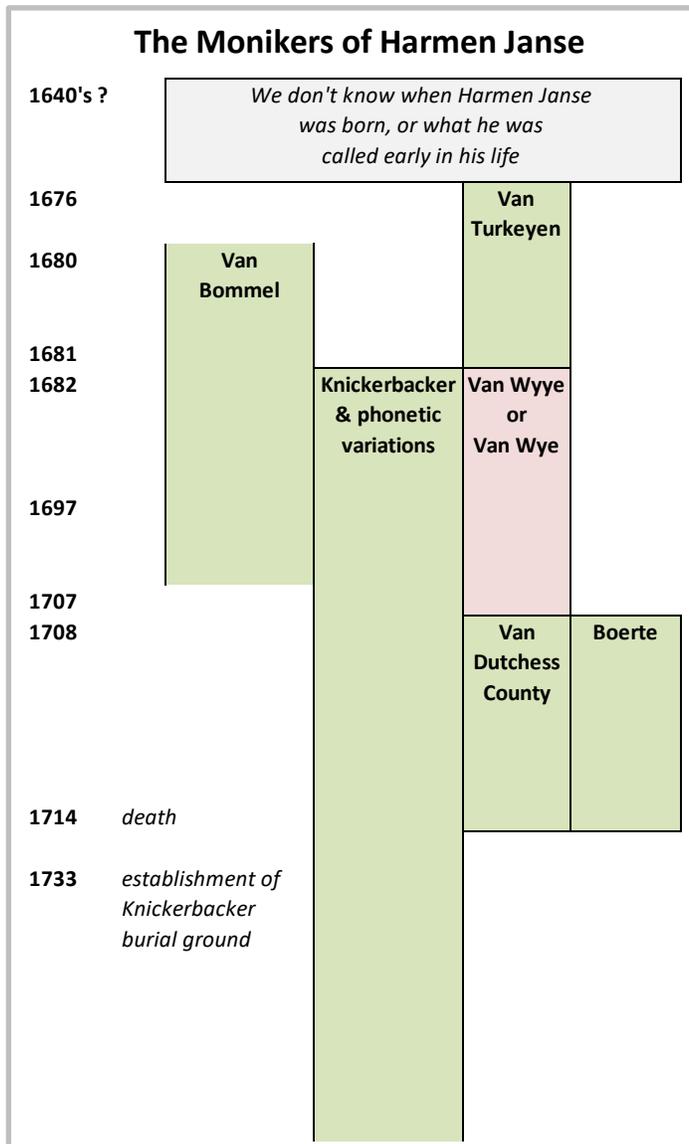
In the case of UCLA, Milwaukee, and Los Angeles, “Van” was an indication of where this person was living at the time.

The switch from Lew to Kareem was a permanent change in this person’s name, but he is still “Van New York” because that is where he was born.



Now, consider our ancestor, Harmen Knickerbocker. The story is complicated.

Our ancestor's name was Harmen Janse. The name "Janse" was in honor of his father.



There are many records where our ancestor was called "Van Bommel," which meant something important to our ancestor. He used Van Bommel over many years, including in church, during times when he lived in different places.

December of 1682 was the first occurrence of "Kinnenkerbacker." Our ancestor adopted a version of this as his surname, and used it his will. Also, his son later set aside a "Knickerbacker" burial ground to preserve the spot where Harmen was buried.

Our ancestor went through some transient periods. For example, he was called Van Turkeyen by 1676, continuing through the summer of 1682.

Our ancestor was called "Van Wyee" or something similar in two records. This has sparked theories about his roots. Some people claim that he was using "Van Wye" as a name. In reality, it appears that his use of Wye was transient.

There are also court records that show that our ancestor was sometimes called him Harmen Boertie. This seems to have a simple explanation. (Boer = Farmer.)

In his will, he was Harmen Janse Knickerbacker Van Dutchess County.

In this report, we will focus on three of our ancestor's monikers: Knickerbacker, Van Bommel, and Van Turkeyen. We will also briefly discuss the records for Harmen Boertie.

In part 2 of this series, we will discuss the period when our ancestor was called "Van Wyee" or "Van Wyye" or "Van Wye."

In part 3 of this series, we will discuss the myth related to the Van Berghen Knickerbockers.

Background Materials

The search for the truth around Harmen Janse Knickerbocker involves lots of moving parts. We will build up the story one piece at a time, beginning with some background material.

Ninth-Hand Information

Before we start, we need to remind ourselves that we are often dealing with second hand information. Actually, it's far worse than "second hand." Consider the will of Harmen Janse Knickerbocker.

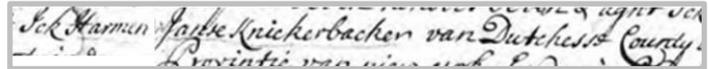
| <u>Ninth-Hand Information</u> | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Harmen Janse |
| 2 | Scribe (name unknown) |
| 3 | Lawrence Knickerbocker (as executor) |
| 4 | Court clerk |
| 5 | Translator |
| 6 | Typesetter / publisher |
| 7 | Google books OCR operator |
| 8 | Researcher (Bryan Knickerbocker) |
| 9 | You, the reader of this PDF file |

The will first existed in the mind of Harmen Janse. Harmen dictated to scribe, and put the will in his drawer. About 6 years later, Lawrence Knickerbocker delivered the will to a court clerk. 200 years later, someone translated the court records to English. The translator's work was sent to a typesetter, which resulted in a printed copy of a book. After another 90 years, somebody from Google Books converted the printed book back to text via the OCR process. I, Bryan Knickerbocker, have a copy of the Google Book. You, the reader of this PDF file, are the ninth pair

of hands involved in this process. Modern technology allows us to skip some of these steps. The original Dutch version of the will is now available on Ancestry. However, we are still dealing with "second hand" information, or worse.

Even a subtle change in wording, at any step in the process, can lead to confusion.

For example, consider seven words in Harmen Janse's will: "Ich Harmen Janse Knickerbocker van Dutchess County".

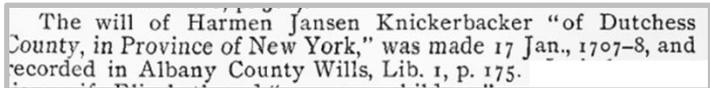


What is the meaning of VAN, in this context? There are three possibilities:

| What are we <u>trying to translate?</u> | Possible Meanings of the word VAN | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | <u>Could this refer to a local place?</u> | <u>Could this be where the person was born?</u> | <u>Could this be the person's surname?</u> |
| Harmen Janse Knickerbocker VAN Dutchess County | Yes. There is a Dutchess County in NY. | No. "Dutchess County" is a unique name, first created in 1683. | No. There has never been a family with the surname of "Dutchess County". |

This is a trivial example. The proper translation is obvious: Harmen Janse **OF** Dutchess County.

Now, consider this excerpt from William Van Alstyne's History of the Knickerbocker Family from NYGB&R. Notice the words



inside the quotes include "OF Dutchess County." The use of the quotes was incorrect. The will was in Dutch, and said **VAN** Dutchess County. This illustrates that translations need to be handled carefully. VAN is one of the most important words in trying to decipher the story of our ancestor.

Many Men Named Harmen Janse

The Dutch colonies were small; the first census, in 1697, showed only about 320 families in the original, very large, Albany County. However, over the history of the colonies, there were multiple men named Harmen Janse. Munsell's *Collections of the History of Albany* attempted to list them:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Harmen Janse Bos | Harmen Janse Lyndrayer | Harmen Janse Scheel |
| Harmen Janse Jeroloman | Harmen Janse Metselaer | Harmen Janse Turkeyen |
| Harmen Janse Knickerbacker Van Wye | Harmen Janse Ryckman | Harmen Janse Van Bommel |

These sorts of lists must be handled with care. They might fool readers into thinking that we can identify and trace all of the men named Harmen Janse. This is wrong. There are numerous records that refer to "Harmen Janse" without any direct evidence of which man they were talking about.

Notice that the above list shows Harmen Janse Knickerbacker Van Wye, and Harmen Janse Van Bommel, and Harmen Janse Turkeyen. As we will discuss, these were all the same person.

Also notice that two of the above "names" are professions (Lyndrayer = Ropemaker; Metselaer = Mason). A third "name" is a description of a person's eyes. (Scheel = cross eyed or squint eyed.)

Harmen Janse Goes to Jail

Here is an example of the problems with tracing "Harmen Janse." This Harmen Janse wound up in jail. The court record to the right explains why he was in jail, but offers no clue as to which "Harmen Janse" was in trouble.

Thankfully, this was not our ancestor. As shown in the snapshot below, the man who went to jail was Harmen Janse Lyndrayer.

Extraordinary session held in Albany, March 15, 1680/1

Jurian Teunise Tappen complains to their honors that Harmen Janse *Lyndrayer*¹ has defamed his daughter Cornelia and publicly slandered her in a tavern, saying that he has three times slept with the plaintiff's daughter and committed carnal conversation with her, like a man does with his lawful wife. He

¹ Rope maker.

Extraordinary session held in Albany, March 16, 1680/1

Jurian Teunise has requested the Messieurs to meet because Harmen Janse has sent to him two arbitrators to settle in friendship the matter of defamation of his daughter Cornelia, having publicly stated that three times he had had carnal conversation with her. He therefore declares that if he is willing to confess that he has falsely lied in the matter and has nothing to say about her but what is honorable and virtuous, and is willing to pay the costs, he will accept satisfaction.

Whereupon Harmen Janse was brought from the jail and asked whether he would confess that he had acted wrongly and lied falsely in stating that he had had carnal conversation with the said daughter and whether he was ready to declare that he had nothing to say about her but what was honorable and virtuous. He could not resolve to do so and therefore was taken

"Lyndrayer" was apparently a contraction of LIJN (line) and DRAAIER (turner). Thus, a man who turned line to make rope was called Harmen Janse Lindraaier.

The man called Harmen Janse Lyndrayer was apparently also known as Harmen Janse Van Salsbergen, which *might* mean that he came from Salsberger. However, there seems to have been some debate where he actually came from. He might actually have been Harmen Janse Van Salisbury.

The many names of Harmen Janse Lyndrayer Van Salsbergen (or Van Salisbury?) are a perfect example of the challenge that we face when trying to trace our ancestor.

Harmen Janse Scheel, the Cross-Eyed Man

There was also a man called Harmen Janse Scheel who lived in the Dutch colonies. This is another good example of our challenge.

In Volume 4 of the Early Records of Albany and Renselaerswyck, a footnote speculates that Harmen

Harmen Janssen Scheel,⁸⁴
⁸⁴ *Scheel* means cross-eyed. It may have been a nickname of either Harmen Jansen van Salsbergen, or Harmen Jansen Knickerbacker.

Janse Scheel might be a reference to either our ancestor or Harmen Jansen Van Salsbergen.

It turns out that the speculation in the above footnote is wrong.

A court record (shown to the right) show that *Sheele Herman* was yet another man, Harmen Janz Van Vackenburg.

(It appears that Harmen Janz Van Valkenburgh may have left the area by about 1660, due to some serious legal problems.)

Whether at that time Harman Jansz van Valckenburgh, commonly called *Scheele* Herman* was not sitting there, drinking? Says, He saw him drinking.

Whether he did not hear him relate and declare that when he was last in irons he, Herman Jansz van Valckenburgh, aforesaid, saw the wife of the commissary aforesaid consort and whore around with others, showing with outstretched arms the size of the horns which were put on the said commissary's head? Answers and declares, Yes.

* "squint-eyed" Herman

Harme Janse, Antho. Van Shayk, and Andries Hanse

Here is yet another example of an historical record for a man called Harmen Janse.

Here, four men ask for permission and help in building a bridge over a creek called the Steene Hoeck kill.

Steene Hoeck was the name of a creek near Green Island, just south of Van Schaick Island. Green "island" no longer exists, because a finger of the Mohawk was filled in to make room for a freeway.

Ordinary session held in Albany, July 4, 1682

A petition was presented of Harme Janse, Antho. van Schayk, Andries Hanse and Pieter Heyndrix, inhabitants residing near the Steene Hoeck kill, who inform their honors of the necessity of building a bridge across the said kill; and whereas the said bridge would also be for the use of the inhabitants of the Halve Maen, they request that the persons residing there may be ordered to help build it.

The honorable court consider that it is necessary [296] that the said bridge be built as speedily as possible for the improvement of the king's highway, but as the petitioners residing near the kill are mainly interested in it, they are ordered to haul the lumber for the bridge and then, sharing the work equally with the inhabitants of the Halve Maen, to finish the bridge, or, in building it, to work two days to their working one, and then jointly to keep it in repair. And Harme Janse and Antho. van Schayk are authorized to be superintendents of the aforesaid work and to see to it that the bridge is kept in proper repair.

This is probably our ancestor. We know this only because of all the other work that is discussed later. (The names Anthony Van Schaick and Andries Hansen will be discussed several times in this series of reports.)

If this is really our ancestor, this would place him somewhere in the area near the Mohawk River, and near Van Schaick's island, in the summer of 1682.

Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen

Here is our final example of a record for a man named Harmen Janse. This is a brief introduction to Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen.

This is a real-life example of how translators deal with the word VAN. The snapshot below is taken from court records, as translated and assembled by A. J. F. Van Laer. Mr. Van Laer was a noted expert on the history of the Dutch colonies, and might have done his own translations.

This record involves a man who was called Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen.

Harme Janse van Turkeyen,¹ plaintiff, against Barent Albertse Brat, defendant.
The plaintiff says that he made a final settlement of accounts

¹ Turkeyen was the name of a farm near Van Schaick's Island, at the mouth of the Mohawk. See vol. 2, p. 115.

This court case was in 1681. The translation says "VAN Turkeyen" but the footnote explains that Turkeyen was the name of a local farm near Van Schaick's Island, at the mouth of the Mohawk River.

Later, we will discuss Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen in much more detail.

For now, we will point out that the footnote proves that the VAN in "Van Turkeyen" doesn't have any deep inner meaning. It was just this man's current address in 1681.

We must offer our thanks to A. J. F. Van Laer.

We have shown various "Harmen Janse" records. There are many more, and sorting through them is tedious.

After chasing many dead-ends, the above footnote was an exciting lead.

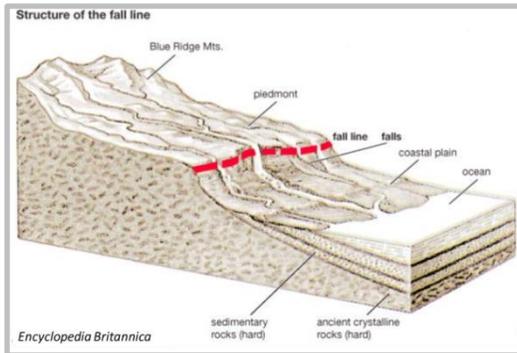
Earlier in this report, we commented on the important role played by translators. Mr. Van Laer is a great example, although he was much more than just a translator. He was also an expert in the early history of New York.

Why Did Turkeyen Exist (and Why Haven't You Heard of It)?

"Turkeyen" is probably not a familiar name to most readers. The name is so obscure that even Google doesn't understand it.

It appears that the history Turkeyen was influenced by both geology and by politics.

The geology impact is obvious, because Turkeyen was just below the Cohoes Falls.



Europeans reached the east coast of America in ocean-going ships. These ships were too large to fully explore inland rivers. The ships had to stop and drop anchor when they reached the fall line of a river. The term "fall line" refers to the point where navigation becomes difficult due to boulders and rocks, or, in extreme cases, waterfalls.

Every major river in the northeastern U.S. had a European outpost just below the fall line.

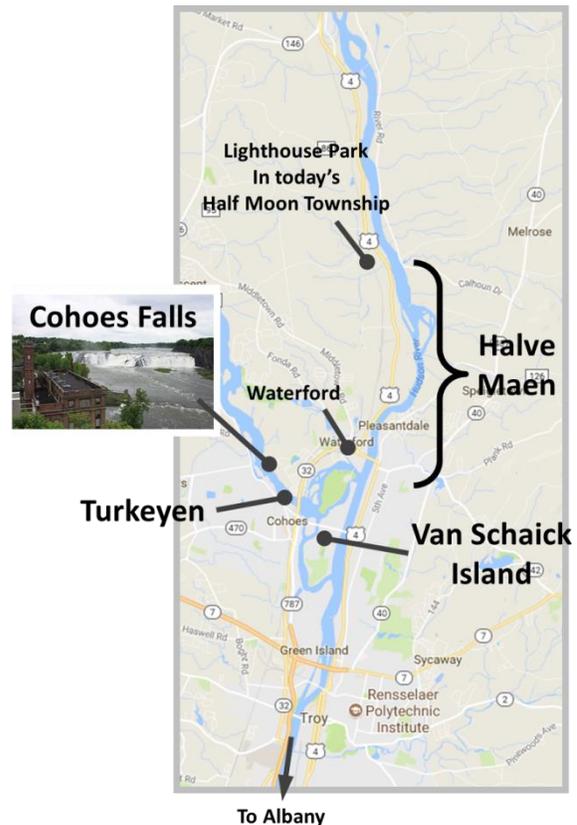
The Europeans were able to go much farther inland on the Hudson than on other rivers on the East Coast. However, there still came a point where the river became so shallow and rocky that the large ships had to drop anchor. Thus, the city that we now call Albany started out as an outpost.

Early explorers used smaller boats to travel further inland. On Henry Hudson's first voyage, these smaller boats stopped about 15 miles north of Albany when they encountered "shoaling waters." The point where they stopped roughly defined the northern edge of what was later called the Halve Maen settlement.

The shoaling waters were a convenient stopping point, but were not an ideal spot for development. Thus, today's Lighthouse Park is not part of a major city. (As we discuss later, the lighthouse is the approximate location where Harmen Janse once lived.)

The early explorers also tried to go west, up the Mohawk River. The explorers were blocked by the Cohoes Falls.

Like all good explorers, the Dutch set up a village below the falls. The Rensselaer family later called this area "Turkeyen" or "Turkjin." (It turns out that Harmen Janse once lived there, too.)



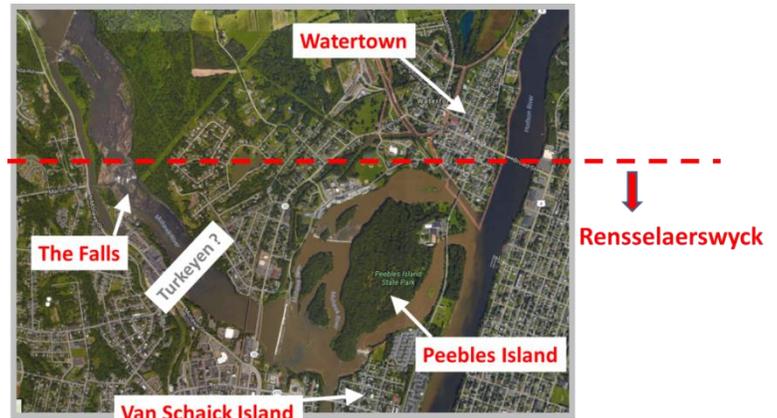
Turkeyen (Turkjin) started out as an individual farm. However, the name Turkeyen was later used to describe the larger area near the farm.

² On Nov. 22, 1670, a Mahican Indian named Anemehanit sold to Jeremias van Rensselaer the land called by the Indians "Nachawinasick" and by the Dutch "Turkeyen," with the Cahoes included therein.

Turkeyen was probably named after the native birds, which were plentiful in the early days of the Dutch colonies.

The creation of Turkeyen seems logical, based on geology. However, politics also played an important role in Turkeyen's creation, and its quick fade from our collective memories.

In the early years, the Dutch subdivided the Hudson valley and gave ownership to various rich patrons. The Rensselaer family was given ownership of a long stretch of land on both sides the Hudson River.



The Rensselaer's property was given a very long name, Rensselaer's Wyck, which translates as Rensselaer's District.

The northern boundary of Rensselaerswyck was defined by the Cohoes Falls.

This use of the Cohoes Falls as the northern boundary is important for two reasons.

First, the location of the boundary probably doomed "Turkeyen" to the trash heap of history. If we look at the bigger picture, Turkeyen was not the ideal spot for a settlement. Just to the northeast was a broad, flat plain with easy access to both the Hudson and the Mohawk. The flat plain became Watertown. Turkeyen never stood a chance. It was bound to be swallowed up, once the artificial Rensselaerswyck boundary was removed.

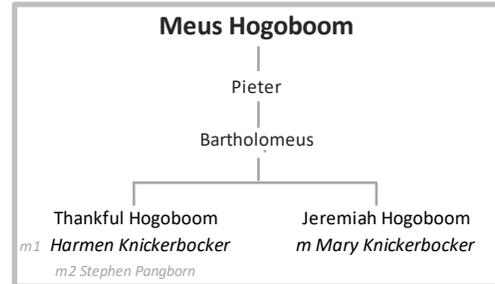
Second, the location of this boundary is important to our genealogy search. In the early Dutch colonies, land owners and their bureaucrats had incredible control over the lives of working people. The Rensselaer family and their bureaucrats were focused on activities south of the Cohoes Falls. The area to the north was outside of the Rensselaer's domain. The northern frontier was slower to develop, and had much less rigorous record-keeping.

Bartholomeus Hogoboom

We need to provide some background information for a man named Bartholomew Hogoboom. He was also known as Mees or Meus Hogoboom.

As we will show later, records for Mews Hogoboom are very useful in helping to track our ancestor, Harmen Janse.

The name Hogoboom might sound familiar. Meus Hogoboom is part of many Knickerbocker family trees. This is because of his grandson, who was also named Bartholomeus Hogoboom. The younger Bartholomeus lived in Litchfield County, Connecticut. Two of his children married Knickerbockers.



Fortunately, Meus Hogoboom is easier to trace than Harmen Janse. There was only one person named Meus Hogoboom who was part of the Hudson River colonies.

THE NEW NETHERLAND REGISTER

PIONEERS AND FOUNDERS OF NEW NETHERLAND

The Hogeboom Family.

By WILLIAM BECKER VAN ALSTYNE, M.D.

Bartholomeus (Mees or Meus) Pietersen Hogeboom, unlike his brother the tile and brick maker, was a trader and operator of a vessel on the Hudson. He first appears in this country in connection with two court cases in 1657. On March 20th, the sheriff at Albany called Meuwis Hogeboom, Gysbert Van Loon (Van Loan) and others to account for playing at golf on the public prayer day. The case was put over but as there is no later reference to fine or punishment the officer probably dismissed them with a warning. The incident is important as showing at what an early time golf was played in this country by the Dutch. On July 22nd. of the same year, Jacob Loockermans drew his knife and wounded Mees Hogeboom, knecht (helper, servant or companion) of Claese Hendrickse (Van Utrecht alias Van Schoonhoven) for which the assailant was sentenced to pay 350 guilders. Again he appears in a court case of Sept. 3-13, 1668 when Jan Gerritsen Van Marcken, Schout of Schenectady fined Meeuwes Pietersen for working on Sunday.

During the interval from 1657 to 1674, Mees Hogeboom had advanced from a helper to a freighter with a vessel of his own. Thomas Lewis (Thomas the Irishman) demands of him 49 schepels of wheat and 1 good merchantable beaver, also by agreement Oct. 10, 1674 for 250 beavers and 3 beavers on account for a certain sloop or vessel sold him by said Lewis. On Aug. 6, 1677, Hogeboom promised to carry in freight and lumber for Mr. de Lavall during the whole summer. Claes Van Patten sold him on Jany. 21, 1678-79, one-half of the yacht "Royal Oak" now lying in Steevens Kil and on Aug. 6, 1679 the remaining half.

On April 1, 1684, Mees was ordered to move his yacht from the city stockade and on May 6th. he was arrested for contempt of court for not obeying the order. A month later, on June 30th. Hendrick Abelsen (Reddenhausen) and Nanning Harmensen (Visscher) bought from Hogeboom a yacht called "The Royal Oak", Abelsen's share being sold on Sept. 10th. to Harmensen.

Not only did Mees convey freight and passengers, but also carried on a trade with the Indians and the usual close competition of that occupation brought his name like many others into court. In 1677 Sheriff Michael Siston complained that the daughters of Meus Hogeboom were illegally soliciting Indian trade. Two years later, in March 1679-80, Sheriff Richard Pretty called the trader to account for allowing his children to run to the Indian houses on the hill and in 1681 accused him of smuggling beavers. Again on Aug. 4, 1685, Arnout Cornelissen Viele charged Ariaentje and Geertruy, the daughters of Mees Hogeboom, with illegally trading with the Indians. As no punishment is recorded for these alleged misdemeanors, the complaints doubtless resulted from jealousy on the part of the other traders.

Mees was mentioned Rensselaerswyck records many times. We will discuss him more later.

Marcellus Janse Van Bommel

This is the last piece of our background section.

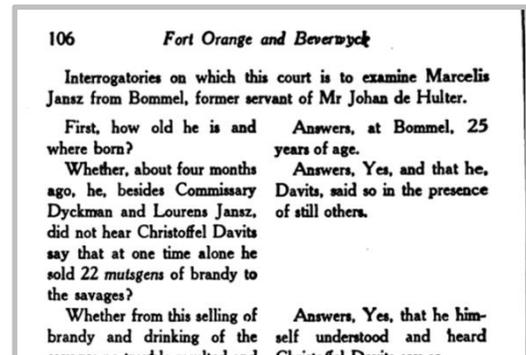
Here, we are dealing with a man called Marcellus Janse Van Bommel.

Marcellus shows up in many court records in the area near Beaverwyck and Fort Orange (near today's city of Albany). He apparently had a license to brew and sell beer, and to prevent others from doing the same. This led to many cases in the local court. Most of the cases were minor, equivalent to a small claims court today.

Shown here is an excerpt from a court record.

Marcellus testified that he was born in Bommel, and that he was 25. This record is from 1654, so Marcellus was born in 1629.

In this excerpt, notice the translator's decision to translate "Van Bommel" as "From Bommel." This was appropriate, in this context. (In every other historic records, the word VAN was always preserved: Van Bommel.)



Bond of Jan Barentsen Dulleman to Marcellis Jansen

[365]¹ On this day, the 6th of August 1663, appeared before me, Dirck van Schelluyne, notary public, and before the after-named witnesses, Jan Barentsz Dulleman, baker here, and acknowledged that he was well and truly indebted to Marcellis Jansz, born at Bommel in Gelderland, also an inhabitant here, in the sum of fifty Carolus guilders at 10 groats apiece, Holland money, growing out of the matter of goods delivered for his wants and necessities

There is absolutely no doubt about where Marcellus Van Bommel was born: In Bommel, in Gelderland. This was documented in a bond given by Marcellus to another colonist.

(Unfortunately, our ancestor, Harmen Janse, didn't leave such clear records.)

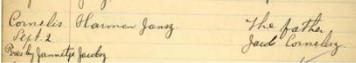
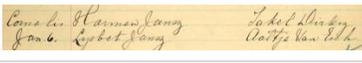
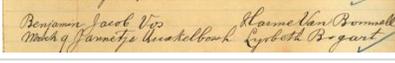
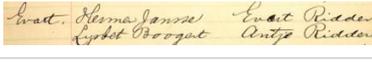
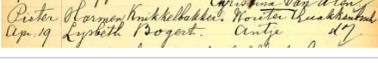
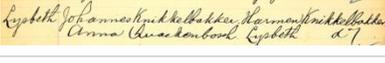
The descendants of Marcellus Van Bommel had it easy, in one way: They knew the family originated in Gelderland. However, they also had to face an interesting event: The descendants of Marcellus Van Bommel adopted his first name, Marcellus, and their last name. This illustrates the sometimes chaotic way that the settlers adopted surnames.

Now we are finally ready to drill down into the details of Harmen Janse and his many names.

Church Records for Harmen Janse

In the Dutch Church at Albany, our ancestor used multiple descriptions of himself.

Church Records for Harmen Janse

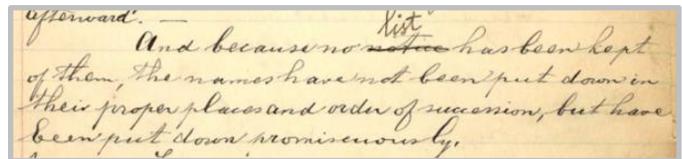
| <i>Date</i> | <i>"Name"</i> | <i>Image</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|-------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| 1686 | Harme Janz Van Bommel |  | Baptism of son Lawrence |
| 1688 | Harmen Janz |  | Baptism of Cornelius #1 (who died young) |
| 1692 | Harmen Janz |  | Baptism of Cornelius #2 |
| 1695 | Harmen Knickelbacker |  | Baptism of Daughter Cornelia |
| 1698 | Harme Van Bommel |  | Witness at a baptism |
| 1699 | Harmen Janse |  | Baptism of Son Evert |
| 1702 | Harmen Knickelbacker |  | Baptism of Son Pieter |
| 1702 | Harmen Knickelbakker |  | Witness at baptism of granddaughter Lysbeth |

If we're keeping score, there are 2 record for Van Bommel, 3 for Knickerbacker, and 3 for Harmen Janse. (There are zero church records for Harmen Janse Van Wye or anything similar.)

We should point out that the records shown above are not the original church records. Instead, these are from a transcription that was done by the Holland Society.

Several genealogists have claimed that "Harmen Janse Knickelbacker" was a member of the church in 1683. There was no basis for that claim. Nobody has ever found the early membership records for the church. We don't know when Harmen Janse joined, or what he called himself when he first joined.

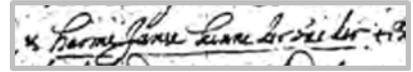
The Holland Society found baptism records, but only starting in 1683. In an attempt to be helpful, the Holland Society assembled a list of the names that appear in the records. The list was in "promiscuous" order, to use their word. The name Harmen Janse Knickelbacker appears in this list, which only proves that the Holland Society was aware that our ancestor was once a church member. (Interestingly, Harmen Van Bommel does not appear in the member list. Somebody at the Holland Society was making editorial decisions, without documenting their basis.)



Since we are dealing with second hand information, we can't be sure about how "Knickerbacker" was actually spelled in the original records. We also can't be sure if our ancestor used both "Janse" and "Janz" in his descriptions of himself. (In court records, he was always "Janse.")

Harmen Janse Knickerbacker Van Dutchess County

Shown to the right is the first-ever occurrence of any version of the name “Knickerbacker.” This is from a 1682 deed, written by Robert Livingston, who was the Albany County secretary. (This deed will be discussed in great detail in part 2 of this series.)



The above words describe our ancestor as something like “harme janse kinne ker backer.”

Notice that Mr. Livingston’s large counterclockwise swirls to start the letters “H” in HARME, and K in KINNE or KENNE. Notice that the word that might say “ker” actually has a *clockwise* swirl. The above words might actually say “kenne der backer.” However, “der backer” never appeared again after its (possible) appearance in the handwriting above.

Ordinary session held in Albany, May 6, 1684

Harme Janse kinneker Backer, plaintiff, against Mews Hoogetoom, defendant.

The plaintiff demands of the defendant 8 schepels of wheat on account of a hay-barrack auger.

The defendant acknowledges the debt.

The honorable court condemn the defendant to pay the plaintiff the said sum of 8 schepels of wheat according his confession, *cum expensis*.

Mews Hoogetoom, plaintiff, against Harme Janse kinnekerbacker, defendant.

The plaintiff says that 5 years ago he boarded a cow with the defendant, which the defendant in the spring drove out, without notifying the plaintiff, and which thus perished.

About 17 months after buying land, our ancestor was involved in two court cases that started on the same day. In the first he was called Harmen Janse “kinneker Backer.” In the second, he was “kinnekerbacker.” Those spellings are consistent with Robert Livingston’s description from 1682.

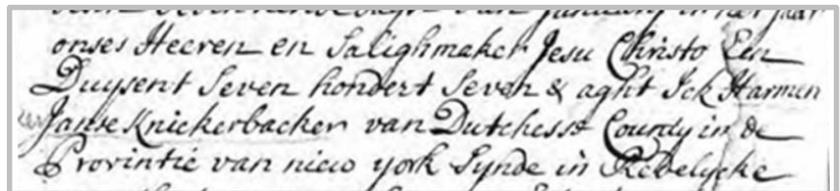
Like many Dutchmen, our ancestor did not use a surname. However, his land ownership was recorded under the description Harmen Janse Kinnekerbacker. This became his surname.

As shown here, the second court case involved Mews Hogoboom. This court case will be discussed in more detail later.

Harmen Janse still had not fully adopted “Knickerbacker” even in the late 1600’s. In the census for Albany County in 1697, our ancestor was simply Harmen Janse. For the 1699 oath of loyalty, our ancestor was again Harmen Janse.

In the 1699 loyalty oath, Harmen’s oldest son described himself as J.K. Backer. Johannes used “J.K. Backer” at least four times in his life, including in the inscription in his own family bible. (J.K. Backer is discussed in Part 2 of this series.)

As we have already shown, our ancestor described himself as Harmen Janse Knickerbacker in his will. By then, he was living in the northwest corner of Dutchess County, just above today’s town of Tivoli.



To all Christian People to whom this present writing shall come Johannis Knickerbaker of the Manor of Rensselaerwyck in the City of Albany in the Province of New York in America Lawrence Knickerbaker Cornelis Knickerbaker Coert Knickerbaker Peter Knickerbaker Jan Verburgh and Cornelis his Wife all of Dutchess County in the said Province Sons and Daughters of Harmen Janse Knickerbaker late of Dutchess County aforesaid Deceased Greeting Attend Ye that for divers good Causes and Considerations them moving and for the Sum of Six Killings Current Money of the Province to them in hand paid at and before the Signing and Delivery hereof by their Brother in Law Anthony Bergardus of the City of Albany and Janetie their Sister his Wife

By the mid 1700's, all of Harmen Janse's children were called "Knickerbaker."

For example, this deed, from 1723, is part of a series of transactions where the children sold the land that they had inherited from their father. The children were called Knickerbaker.

Shown below is the most interesting deed that involves Harmen Janse's old property. This is from 1733, when Cornelius Knickerbaker sold a portion of his father's land in Dutchess County. As shown here, the deed clearly states that Harmen Janse Knickerbaker died and was buried in Dutchess County. (This deed involves land in Dutchess County. However, the deed was mistakenly filed in Ulster County. This is probably why it has been overlooked until recently.)

The deed specifically refers to this land, in Dutchess County, as being "whereof Harmen Janse Knickerbaker, father of the said Cornelis, died." Also, the sale was "excepting and reserving ... one quarter of an acre of land for a burying place for the Knickerbakers where the father of said Cornelis Knickerbocker lyes."

devised Land whereof Harmen Janse Knickerbaker father father of the said Cornelis Knickerbaker died.
 Quarter of an acre of land for a Burying Place for the Knickerbakers now where the father of said Cornelis Knickerbakers lyes

The acceptance of "Knickerbaker" was not universal. For example, even as late as the 1780's, there were several records in Connecticut which used "Kernickerbaker." This included the tombstone of Harmen Janse's grandson, John Kernickerbaker (the son of Lawrence Knickerbaker.)

When he died, Harmon Janse was living on property that was just south of Livingston Manor. The Manor was owned by Robert Livingston, the former county secretary for Albany County. The southern border of the manor was approximately today's southern border between Columbia County. However, the border was poorly defined during Harmen Janse's time.

Long after Harmen Janse had died, there were multiple lawsuits involving the exact boundary of Livingston Manor. The lawsuits are documented in a 1980 book, *The Law Practice of Alexander Hamilton, Volume 3*. This book contains useful information about the early Knickerbockers.

Peter Knickerbaker being duly sworn saith that he is upwards of eighty two years old, and about fifty seven years ago he was preparing to build upon Lot No. 1 in Schuyler's Patent; that he then lived in the house where his Father lived, which M^r Nicholas Hoffman jun^r now occupies; and that the North boundary of the aforesaid Lot was at the Killitie upon the Hudson's River;

; and that his Father Hermanse Knickerbaker died in the year
 → 1714;

Sworn 18th Aug^t 1784
 before me—
 Anth^y Hoffman

As part of a lawsuit, Peter Knickerbocker testified that his father died in 1714. Peter was 82 years old at the time of the deposition. However, his father's death, when Peter was 12, would have been a major event. We can assume he would remember the date at which he lost his father, at least to within few years.

The above testimony of Peter Knickerbacker referred to his father as Harmen Knickerbacker. Interestingly, though, there were several witnesses in the above court case who testified that our ancestor was also known as Harmen Boertie.

Harmen Boertie

During the court case in 1784, witnesses stated that Harmen Janse Knickerbacker was also called Harmen Boertie.

We might doubt the accuracy of the testimony if it came from one or two strangers.

However, the witnesses included Elizabeth Benn, the sister-in-law of two of Lawrence Knickerbocker's sons (Petrus and Cornelius). Another witness was Harmen Knickerbacker, the son of Lawrence.

Thus, there can be no doubt that, late in life, Harmen Janse was called "Boertie."

Once again, we are dealing with second hand information that has gone from someone's handwritten court notes, to a transcriber, and then to publisher. Also, the court records make it clear that this trial was conducted in English.

We suspect that our ancestor was actually calling himself by some variation of the Dutch word "Boert." Boert and Boertje mean "farmer."

For many years our ancestor was called Harmen Janse kinneker Backer. He probably grew tired of being asked if he was a baker. And so, late in life, he was called Boertje ... farmer.

Elizabeth Bender—67 Years of Age—Daughter of Hugh Benn—Never heard other Name for Landing before the other Action than Hugh Benn's Landing—Father lived at Landing—Never knew a place called Suskahampa till the Action brought—Sisters married 2 of the Knickenbackers, Cornelius & [P]etrus—Was intimate in Knickenbacker's Family—never heard they had any pretensions—Sons of Lowrence Knickenbacker & Grandsons of Harme Boertie—Lowrence Knickenbacker lived next to Loundert—Never knew any Indian Settlements in the Neighbourhood—Dedrick settled under Manor, so did Best—Her Father was at last Trial as a Witness.

Harme Knicke[r]backer—Voire dire—in Chief
71 Years of Age—first Time Boards & Timber were brought for Mill little brought there which lay and rotted—Mill Wrights came from Jersey to build Mill—His Father's name Lowrence who was son of Harme Boertie—cannot tell how long before Trial but he heard his Father Uncles & Hoffman talk on the subject—His Father sold his share to Hoffman—His Father prevented him from purchasing—Does not recollect the sum his Father sold it for—Reason why he had ~~not~~ did not purchase because it was a Risk to go to Law—

Over the last 100+ years, various Knickerbocker genealogists have claimed either that (a) we are descended from upper class families, or that (b) we are descended from a working-class man who was probably illiterate.

The lawyer's notes from the 1784 court case describe our Knickerbacker ancestors as being poor and illiterate.

Knickerbackers poor & illiterate
Livingston wealthy & cunning
[Hamilton's notes on wrapper of preceding set of pages] Knickerbackers poor

Peter Knicke[r]backer—aged 82 Years—his
Brothers & Sisters did not go to Law because they had no Money—This Conversation was in Year 1710—
-His Father was poor & had no Money,

Peter Knickerbocker stated that his father was poor. He also stated that his brothers and sisters had never pursued the land claims because they had no money.

Harmen Janse Van Bommel

We will now discuss the well-known fact that our ancestor often called himself Harmen Janse Van Bommel.

Many readers already know at least part of this story. However, we will be methodical in our approach to the data.

Shown below are the court records that prove that Harmen Janse Knickerbocker was the same man who was sometimes called Harmen Van Bommel.

This court case spanned two of the monthly sessions in Albany. In the first session, the court reporter referred to Harm Janse kinnekerbacker. The court case was not completed in the first session, and therefore was carried over. In the second session, the court reporter referred to Harmen Janse, Harm Bommel, and Harme Van Bommel. There is no doubt that these all refer to the same person.

May 6, 1684: Court Session in Albany

*Mews Hoogeboom, plaintiff, against **Harme Janse kinnekerbacker**, defendant. The plaintiff says that 5 years ago he boarded a cow with the defendant, which the defendant in the spring drove out, without notifying the plaintiff, and which thus perished. The defendant says that about 5 years ago he boarded a heifer of the plaintiff's, the defendant in April drove out into the woods together with which the defendant's cows, but which got stuck in a morass and was eaten by the wolves. He therefore thinks he is not liable. He further offers to prove that the heifer was fat and sleek and that it was driven out at a suitable time. The honorable court put over the case to the next court day for further evidence by the defendant.*

June 6, 1684 Court Session in Albany

*Case according to the preceding minutes. **Harme Janse** produces Andries Hanse as a witness. Andries Hanse being sworn, deposes and says that **Harme Bommel** drove out the cow together with his own and that she was strong and that it was a suitable time, when there was already plenty of grass, and that among other things he said: "Mees' young cow is strong and will not be affected by calving or anything else."*

*The jury, returning their verdict, find **Harme van Bommel** not liable for the loss of the cow.*

(Court Minutes of Albany, Rennselaerswyck, and Schenectady, 1680-1685, Volume 3.)

In addition to these two court record, Kathlyne Viele's book lists five additional records that appear to refer to our ancestor:

- 1680 (April 6) Harmen Janse Van Bommell (Proceedings of the Comm., 1676, 80 p. 500).
- 1682 (May) Herman Van Bommel paid for the use of a small pall (Records of Albany)
- 1686 (Jan'y 1) Harmen Jansz Van Bommel (Dutch Church Register).
- 1689 (Sept.) Harmen Jansen Van Bommel (Munsell's Annals of Albany, Vol. II, p. 112, 113).
- 1698 (March 9) Harmen Van Bommell, Lysbet Bogert (Albany Dutch Church Register).

Thus, we see that our ancestor referred to himself as Van Bommel repeatedly over at least an 18 year period. This included two very important forums: court records and church records.

We have found an additional record for Harmen Van Bommel, from October 4, 1681. This one is important, because it tells us where Harmen Van Bommel was living in 1681.

Ordinary session held in Albany October 4, 1681

Jan van Ness, plaintiff, against Barent Albertse Bratt, defendant.

The plaintiff demands of the defendant 72 boards according to liquidation of accounts with him in the spring.

The defendant requests an itemized account and produces an account of Jan van Loon, smith, of fl.60, payable by him for a plow, and, as they were then partners, he claims that he must pay one-half of the said account.

The plaintiff on his side claims compensation for wear and tear of a grindstone and other farm utensils.

[179] The court request and authorize Aernout Cornelise and Jacobb Sanderse to examine the differences between the parties and to report to their honors.

Aernout Cornelise and Jacob Sanders, as referees, adjudge that Jan van Ness must pay to Barent 2 schepels of wheat for the aforesaid claim and that each party must pay one-half of the cost. Barent Alb. Brat claims in addition 4 schepels of wheat for damage done to his grain by the plaintiff's hogs.

The honorable court order the defendant to pay the plaintiff the 72 boards demanded. On the other hand, Jan van Ness is to pay Bar^t. the 2 schepels of wheat and each party is to pay one-half of the costs.

As to the claim of the 4 schepels of wheat, this is referred to the decision of Baltus Barentse and Harme van Bommel, who were present.

Geurt Hendrix, plaintiff, against Barent Alb. Bratt, defendant.

The plaintiff complains that the defendant without his consent has built a pig pen on his land.

The 1681 court case involved a set of petty claims between neighbors named Jan Van Ness, Barent Albertse Bratt, and Geurt Hendrix.

One of the claims was that some hogs had eaten the neighbor's grain.

The court didn't rule on the issue of the hogs. Instead, they deferred to Baltus Barentse and Harme Van Bommel, who "were present." This presumably means that the two men were nearby when the hogs got loose.

We are very lucky. These men all appear in other records. In fact, they are mentioned in a deed that involved another neighbor.

Deed from Annetje van Schaick, widow of Goosen Gerritsen van Schaick, to Anthony van Schaick for land at Half Moon (not executed)

[137] Appeared before me, Rob^t. Livingston, secretary of Albany, colony of Rensselaerswyk and Schinnecktady, etc., in presence of the Honorable Mr Cornelis van Dyk and Mr Dirk Wessells, magistrates of the same jurisdiction, Annetie van Schayk, widow of the late Goose Gerritse van Schayk who declared that in true, rightful and free ownership she grants, conveys and makes over hereby in real and actual possession to and for the behoof of Anthonie Goosense van Schayk her farm lying on the Island of Cahoos and all her right therein, as well lands, house, barn and ricks as also her rights in land lying above the fourth *Spruyt*,¹ excepting the farm of Harman Lievense, the farm of Jan van Ness, the farm of Barent Albertse Bratt, the farm of Geurt Hendrix and the farm of Jan Jacobse van Noorstrant and likewise the farm of Roeloff Gerritse; which she, the grantor, does by virtue of a patent granted to Phil: Pieterse Schuyler and her husband, deceased, in company, by the late Governor General Francois Lovelace under date of the 30th of March 1672, which Phil: Shuyler's half was conveyed to her, the grantor, on the 12th of July 1681, to all of which reference is herein made; and that free and unincumbered without any charges thereon or issuing out of the same (saving the lord's right), without the grantor's making any further claim in the least thereto, acknowledging that she is fully paid and satisfied therefor, the first penny with the last, therefore giving *plenam actionem cessam* and full power to the aforesaid Anth^o. van Shayk, his heirs, successors or assigns, to do with and dispose of the aforesaid farm, house, barn, ricks and other land lying over the fourth *spruyt* to her, the grantor, heretofore belonging, together with all rights and privileges which she has had therein (excepting the six farms of the aforesaid six persons),

¹ Literally, "sprout," referring to a branch or fork of the Mohawk river.

The farms of these men are described as being on Cahoos Island, or perhaps above the fourth sprout of the Mohawk River. The fourth sprout is the finger of the river that separates what we now call Peebles Island from the mainland.

This means that Jan Van Ness and the others were somewhere below the falls, near the boundaries of today's town of Waterford.

Since Harmen was there, to see the hogs get loose, we assume that he was also living there.

Thus, in 1681, we can show that Harmen Janse "Van Bommel" was near the area called Turkeyen.

Barent Albert Bratt

We need to plant a seed. Notice that both of the records above contain a rather unique name: Barent Albert Bratt. This name appears several times in this report.

Which meaning of “Van” applies to Harmen Jansen Van Bommel?

Various people claim that Harmen Janse was actually born in Bommel in the Netherlands. This might be true.

We have already shown proof that Marcellus Janse Van Bommel, was born in the town of Bommel (Zaltbommel) in Gelderland, Holland.

There was also a third man in the Dutch colonies who called himself “Van Bommel.” We have not been able to trace him.

The problem, as we’ve already shown, is that VAN can have three different meanings. Is Bommel:

1. A local town in NY where Harmen was living? *No; no such town existed.*
2. The town where he was born? *Possibly. There is a Bommel in Holland.*
3. His surname? *Possibly. There is a Van Bommel line in Holland*

For Harmen Janse, we don’t have enough information. Van Bommel could be a surname, or it could be a reference to a town. It’s a tossup.

(Some readers might disagree with the “tossup” statement. Some readers might claim that they know that Harmen Janse came from the town of Wijhe in Holland. Other readers might claim that they know that Harmen Janse was from the Van Wye family. Both groups need to read Part 2 of this series on the many names of Harmen Janse.)

Was Marcellus Janse Van Bommel the brother of Harmen Janse Van Bommel?

We have mentioned Marcellus Janse Van Bommel earlier. Until now, though, we intentionally left out one interesting footnote. This part of the discussion fits best here.

Jonathon Pearson was an expert on the early Dutch settlements.

In his book *Genealogies of the First Settlers of the Ancient County of Albany*, Mr. Pearson suggested that Harmen Janse Van Bommel might be the brother of Marcellus Janse Van Bommel.

Van Bommel, Harmen Janse, perhaps brother of Marcellus Janse Van B. Ch: bp.; Lourens, Jan 1, 1686; Cornelis, ... 1688. Van Brouckelen (Brockelen) Cornelis Ten...

This is an interesting suggestion, and might be a good use of modern DNA testing.

We suspect Mr. Pearson was speculating, based on the obvious overlap of names: two men called “JANSE VAN BOMMEL.” There is no record that the men called “Van Bommel” ever interacted with each other.

Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen

We will now discuss the details for the man called Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen.

Earlier parts of this report have mentioned the following tidbits:

- The location of Turkeyen, near the mouth of the Mohawk, and near the Cohoes Falls.
- Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen, who was mentioned in local records.
- Mews Hoogetboom, who was involved in lawsuits against Harmen Janse.
- Harmen Janse Van Bommel, who once lived near the Mohawk, apparently had some knowledge of the falls.

In this section, we will dive deep into the weeds. As far as we know, this is the first time anyone has tried to prove that Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen was the same man as Harmen Janse Knickerbacker.

Here is an overview, in the form of a timeline:

- 1676** June, 1676 is the first mention of Harmen Janse “Van Turkeyen” (so far)
- 1676** In August, Harmen Janse seeks damages from Annetie Lievens Van Schaick. Andries Hanse is a witness.
- 1678** Andries Hansen of Turkeyen had property damage due to a neighbor’s fire.
- 1679** A heifer owned by Mees Hogoboom was taken out to pasture by Harmen Janse. Wolves killed the heifer. Andries Hansen witnessed the event. This became the basis of a lawsuit.
- 1680** Harmen Janse Van Bommel testifies in a court case involving “The Falls.”
- 1681** On July 5th, Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen sued Barent Albert Bratt. So far, this appears to be the last record for Harmen Janse “Van Turkeyen.”
- 1681** On October 4th, Harmen Van Bommel is mentioned in a court case involving residents who live near the 4th sprout of the Mohawk. Barent Albert Bratt was a party in the lawsuit.
- 1682** In July, Harmen Janse, Andries Hanse and Anthony Van Schaick are part of a petition to build a bridge just south of the Mohawk River.
- 1682** In December, Harmen Janse Knickerbacker bought land from Anthony Van Schaick at the north end of Halve Maen, along the trail called Skatcook by the Native Americans.
- 1683** In February, Stephanus Van Cortlandt, the local official who managed affairs for the Rensselaer family, including in the town of Turkeyen, wrote a letter mentioning that “Harmen” had moved to Schachticook.
- 1683** Mees Hogoboom was kicked out of Turkeyen after repeated disputes with his neighbors. One of the neighbors was Andries Hanse, the baker.
- 1684** Mees Hogoboom filed a lawsuit against Harmen Janse Van Bommel / Kinnekerbacker. Court records say that the incident had happened five years earlier. Harmen Janse called Andries Hanse as a witness.

Shown below are the individual records.

Proof that Harmen Janse Van Bommel equals Harmen Janse Turkeyen?

Over 100 years ago, people realized that the two court records involving Mews Hogoboom's heifer are a sort of Rosetta Stone. They prove that Harmen Kenickerbacker was the same man who was called Harmen Janse Van Bommel.

We will now use the same sort of comparison to suggest that Harmen Janse Turkeyen is the same man as Harmen Janse Van Bommel.

This involves two court cases from 1681. One of them was already discussed briefly.

Court Cases with Harmen Janse "Van Turkeyen" and "Van Bommel"

Ordinary session held in Albany, July 5, 1681

Harme Janse van Turkeyen, plaintiff, against Barent Albertse Brat, defendant.

The plaintiff says that he made a final settlement of accounts with the defendant, whereby it appeared that the latter owed him 10 schepels of wheat, 15 schepels of oats and fl.61:2 in seawan, deducting 6 gl. in beavers on account of the horse, but that the defendant refuses to pay.

The defendant says that he has never refused to pay.

The honorable court, having heard the parties on both sides, order the defendant to pay the plaintiff the said quantity of 10 schepels of wheat, 15 schepels of oats and fl.61:2 in seawan, less 6 gl. in beavers on account of the horse, in the space of 14 days, *cum expensis*.

Ordinary session held in Albany October 4, 1681

the aforesaid claim and that each party must pay one-half of the cost. Barent Alb. Brat claims in addition 4 schepels of wheat for damage done to his grain by the plaintiff's hogs.

The honorable court order the defendant to pay the plaintiff the 72 boards demanded. On the other hand, Jan van Ness is to pay Bar! the 2 schepels of wheat and each party is to pay one-half of the costs.

As to the claim of the 4 schepels of wheat, this is referred to the decision of Baltus Barentse and Harme van Bommel, who were present.

Geurt Hendrix, plaintiff, against Barent Alb. Bratt, defendant.

The plaintiff complains that the defendant without his consent has built a pig pen on his land.

In the July 5th case, Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen was seeking payment from Barent Albertse Brat. (This is the same court case that we used at the beginning of this report to first introduce Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen.)

In the October 4th case, Barent Alb. Brat is seeking payment for damages done by someone's hogs. The witnesses include Harme Van Bommel.

The cases were three months apart, so this does not represent absolute proof. It is conceivable – though very unlikely – that Barent Albertse Brat had one neighbor called Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen, and another neighbor called Harmen Janse Van Bommel.

Thus, we need to show additional circumstantial evidence, in addition to the court records.

1676 Court Case for Harme Janse and Andries Hanse

In Part 2 of this series, we will discuss Anthony Van Schaick. He was very wealthy, and very well known. (Van Schaick Island at the mouth of the Mohawk is named after him.)

In 1676, a man named Harmen Janse complained about the grazing habits of the cattle owned by Annetie Lievens, the second wife of Goosen Gerritsen Van Schaick. Our ancestor used Andries Hanse as his witness.

Ordinary session held in Albany, August 15, 1676

Harme Janse, farmer, appearing in court, complains that he is still suffering great loss and damage to his grain by the cattle of Annetie Lievens, the widow of Goose Gerritse, deceased, which he proves by Andries Hanse. He also presents a petition praying that he may take the cattle of the aforesaid widow to Albany to the sheriff in case he again finds them in his grain.

We know from other records that Annetie Lievens, in 1676, was living on the farm that had been owned by her late husband. (Her step son, Anthony Van Schaick, bought the farm in 1681, and built what is now called the Van Schaick Mansion on Van Schaick Island.)

This places a man named Harmen Janse on Van Schaick's island in 1676, with a neighbor or friend named Andries Hanse. This also shows that the Van Schaick family knew a man called Harme Janse.

Andries Hanse of Turkeyen

We know that a man called Andries Hanse was in Turkeyen in 1678.

In 1678, this complaint by the sheriff says that Andries Hanse's property was damaged by a fire that was set by a neighbor.

Ordinary session held in Albany, December 3, 1678

Mr Rich. Pretty, plaintiff, against Jan Cornelise Vyselaer, defendant.

The plaintiff demands of the defendant a fine of fl.150 for having set fire to the woods above Turkjen' without warning the people dwelling thereabout, so that Andries Hanse's property was damaged by it.

The defendant says that he did so for the protection (*bevyding*) of his fence and his land.

The honorable court excuse the defendant this time and warn him not to do so in the future, on condition that he pay the costs now.

[387] Mr Richard Pretty, sheriff, plaintiff, against W^m. Hoffmayer.

The plaintiff declares that Pt. Lessing has complained to him

We can also prove that Andries Hanse was a neighbor of Mees Hogoboom, and that the two men knew each other.

TO STEPHANUS VAN CORTLANDT

You will please look sometime for the contract of Andris, the baker. I can not find it here. There is already a dispute with Mees²⁶⁷ and the neighbors, so that I believe that Mees will not remain farmer long. If you have Andries Hanse's contract,²⁶⁸ you may send it up. By Klaes Lock I have sent down 100 boards for my account.

Your faithful and affectionate sister
Maria v. Rensslaer

11 Sept. 1683, at Watervliet

N: Yorcke 1683, 7br y^e 20th

Dear Sister:

I received your letter and the 100 boards sent by Lock. I understand also that a dispute has arisen between Mees and Andries. I have searched for the contract, but can not find it. I have an impression that it is recorded in the Journal and I trust that you will find it there.

I have spoken to the governor about the colony. He says as

²⁶⁷ Mees Pietersen Hoogenboom. On March 31, 1683, O.S., Stephanus van Cortlandt leased to him the farm called Turkeyen, near Van Schaick's Island, at the mouth of the Mohawk, for the term of three or six years, at the option of either party. *Leases and Contracts, 1666-1708.*

²⁶⁸ March 4, 1677/8, Rev. Nicolaes van Rensselaer leased to Andries Janse the farm in the Greene Bosch, last occupied by Melgert Abrahamse, for the term of three or six years, commencing May 1, 1678. Apparently, Andries Janse had another contract for a farm near Turkeyen, which is not recorded in *Leases and Contracts, 1666-1708.*

Shown here are two letters. The first letter was from Maria Rensselear. The second letter was Stephanus Van Cortlandt's response.

These letters are packed with information.

The first sentence says Andries was a baker. (Remember that we are seeing an English translation; the original document would have said "bakker," which is pronounced "backer.")

The third sentence shows that Mees Hoogeboom had recently rented a farm. However, there was already a dispute with the neighbors.

Andries Hanse's name is mentioned in the first and third sentences of Maria's letter. This implies that Andries was involved in the dispute.

In Stephanus' reply, he specifically says that the dispute is between Mees and Andries.

The footnotes might seem confusing. We will discuss them in more detail.

The first footnote says that the editor of this book (A. J. F. Van Lear) found a copy of the 1683 lease for Mees Hogoboom. The lease was for "the farm called Turkeyen." This apparently means the main farm, not an outlying property. Since Mees was primarily a boat captain, this seems like a challenge. Thus the comment in the first letter that "Mees will not remain long a farmer."

The second footnote contains two separate statements. The first statement mentions that a man called Andries Janse leased land in Greene Bosch (across from Albany). This first statement might be a case of mistaken identity. Other records suggest that the Andries Jansen in Greene Bosch was a different man than the Andries Hansen who lived in Turkeyen. The second statement says that nobody can find the deed for Andries Hanse in Turkeyen. That does not interfere with our story; we have already proven that a man named Andries Hanse was in Turkeyen by 1678.

The 1684 Lawsuit: Mews Hogoboom

We will take another look at the lawsuit filed by Mews Hogoboom. Here, we will repeat only part of the court records. We want to emphasize the dates, and the names of the key players.

These court records provided the spark for all of the research.

May 6, 1684: Court Session in Albany
Mews Hoogeboom, plaintiff, against Harme Janse kinnekerbacker, defendant. The plaintiff says that 5 years ago he boarded a cow with the defendant...

June 6, 1684 Court Session in Albany
Case according to the preceding minutes. Harme Janse produces Andries Hanse as a witness. Andries Hanse being sworn, deposes and says that Harme Bommel ...

(Court Minutes of Albany, Rensselaerwyck, and Schenectady, 1680-1685, Volume 3.)

The court case was in 1684, but the incident had happened five years earlier. The players in the court case were Mews Hoogeboom, Andries Hanse, plus our ancestor, Harmen Janse Bommel Kinnekerbacker.

Other Records for Mews Hogoboom?

We have shown that Mees Hogoboom owned a heifer which died in 1679. We believe this incident happened in Turkeyen.

We have searched extensively for other records related to Mees Hogoboom. As we have shown, we can prove that Mees Hogoboom lived in Turkeyen in the 1682 / 1683 timeframe, and that Andries Hansen was one of his neighbors.

We will keep looking for more records. We would like to find concrete proof that Mees Hogoboom lived in Turkeyen in 1679. This would further solidify the story of Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen.

Stephan Van Cortlandt's mention of "Harmen"

Stephanus Van Cortlandt was a high-ranking official who managed affairs for the Rensselaer family. For Turkeyen, he seemed to play the role of an overseer.

Mr. Cortlandt's correspondence with the Rensselaer family is fascinating.

In 1683, Mr. Cortlandt wrote about a man named Harmen who bought land “at Schachtikook.”

The footnote, which mentions Harmen Janse Knickerbacker and the 1682 deed, was presumably written by historian A.J. Van Laer. We don’t have any proof that “Harmen” really refers to our ancestor, but it seems to fit.

FROM STEPHANUS VAN CORTLANDT
[February? 1683]

I can not believe that Harmen²⁰² bought any land at Schachtikook and that Captain Brock[hols] gave orders to purchase it for him. It may be, but I know nothing about it. He will not give permission to others to do that, so that I do not know what there is to it.

²⁰² Harmen Jansen Knickerbacker. Cf. contract of sale between him and Anthony van Schaick for land at Half Moon, opposite Skachkook, dated December 11, 1682. *Early Records of Albany*, 2:174-75.

The wording in the above letter is fascinating: For the land purchase, Captain Brock gave orders “to purchase it for him.” Obviously somebody was pulling some strings. Unfortunately there is no indication of how Harmen Janse would have known Captain Anthony Brockholes, who was another senior leader in the colonies.

In Part 2 of this series, we will discuss a deed from December, 1682, where Harmen Janse bought land on the west side of the Hudson along the “Skachkook path.”

“Skachkook” is from an old Native American word. It referred to the area above the Halve Maen colony. Mr. Cortlandt’s letter, in February 1683, says that “Harmen” bought land “at Schachtikook.” Mr. Cortlandt was using another variation of the old Native American word.

Neither the deed or the letter was referring to today’s town of Schaghticoke, which is only on the east side of the Hudson. The town of Schaghticoke wasn’t founded until later.

A.J Van Lear, the historian, believed that the “Harmen” mentioned in the above letter was our ancestor. If Mr. Van Lear was right, then letter suggests Harmen Janse was, for some reason, on the radar screen of some important people.

Notice that the Van Cortlandt letter seems to be building on some earlier conversation about Harmen. Perhaps there is more information, out there somewhere. Unfortunately many of the records of Van Rensselaer families, including many letters, were lost in an Albany fire in 1911.

If nothing else, this suggests that the senior leadership of the Dutch colonies may have been aware of the existence of our ancestor. It is important to note, though, that the original 1683 letter from Stephen Cortlandt only referred to “Harmen.” There wasn’t a surname in the letter. (It was the historian, Mr. Van Lear, who later speculated that this was the man later known as Harmen Janse Knickerbacker.)

Summary

We conclude that our ancestor, Harmen Janse, was living in Turkeyen by 1676. During that time, he was called Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen. His neighbors included Bartholomew Hogeboom and Andries Hansen. He also had contact with Anthony Van Schaick.

This appears to be the earliest known record for our ancestor.

To some readers, the “Van Turkeyen” story might seem like a bit of a surprise. This is understandable. This is brand-new research which only gelled in the fall of 2017. Nonetheless, the Van Turkeyen story is supported by lots of data.

Our ancestor was also called Harmen Janse Van Bommel. This has been well-known for more than 100 years. We have shown some new information related to Harmen Janse Van Bommel. However, we have not shown anything that proves, either way, whether our ancestor was from the area called Bommel, or instead was from a family called Van Bommel.

We have also discussed Harmen Boertie, which might also be a new name to some readers. This seems straightforward. Boertie means “farmer.”

Follow-ups

The existence of “Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen” in Rensselaerswyck is an exciting new lead.

There have never been any reports of the Rensselaers discussing Harmen Janse “Knickerbocker” or “Van Bommel” or “Van Wye.” Now, we need to go back and check for the man that they might only have known as Harmen Janse Van Turkeyen.

Many records of the Rensselaer family were lost in the 1911 fire, but it’s worth a try.

Sources of Information

- Page 4: *Van Alstyne* excerpt from NYGBR, January, 1908
- Page 5: List of "Harmens" from CHOA Volume 4
1681 court records from MCARS Volume 3
- Page 6: *Harmen Janssen Scheel* speculation from ERCCA Volume 4
Court record for squint eyed Herman from FOCM Volume 16 Part 2
1682 court record for Harmen Janse, Antho. Van Schaick, etc, from MCARS Volume 3
- Page 7: *Harmen Janse Van Turkyen* record from MCARS Volume 3
- Page 8: Fall Line graphic from Encyclopedia Britannica
Map from Google; Cohoes Falls picture from Wikipedia
- Page 9: Note on the original founding of Turkyen from MCARS Volume 2
Satellite photo from Google
- Page 10: Hogoboom family tree excerpt from Ancestry, userid bmknickerbocker
Van Alstyne history of the Hogeboom family from NNR Volume 1
- Page 11: *Marcellus Janse* court testimony from FOCM Volume 16 Part 2
Marcellis Jansen bond excerpt from ERCCA Volume 3
- Page 12: Church records from Holland Society: Ancestry, Dutch Reformed Church Records 1639-1989
- Page 13: 1682 deed excerpt from KKV
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- Page 14: New York land records from FS. 1723 Deed: Dutchess County L5, p 238
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- Page 15: 1784 court excerpts from LPAH
- Page 16: 1684 court records from MCARS Volume 3
Kathlyne Viele references to *Harmen Janse Van Bommel* from KKV
- Page 17: 1681 court record from MCARS Volume 3
Anthony Van Schaick deed from ERRCA Volume 2
- Page 18: Speculation about *Van Bommel* "brothers" from CGFS
- Page 20: 1681 court records from MCARS Volume 3
- Page 21: 1676 and 1678 court records from ERRCA Volume 2
- Page 22: *Rensselaer* correspondence from CMVR
- Page 23: 1684 court records from MCARS Volume 3
- Page 24: *Van Cortlandt* letter from CMVR

- CGFS** = *Contributions of the First Settlers of the Ancient County of Albany*, Jonathan Pearson (1872)
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- ERCCA** = *Early Records of the City and County of Albany and Colony of Rensselaerswyck* by Jonathon Pearson, revised and edited by A.J.F. Van Lear. Volume 2 (1916); Volume 3 (1918); Volume 4(1919)
- FOCM** = *Fort Orange Court Minutes*, New Netherlands Documents Series
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- LPAH** = *Law Practice of Alexander Hamilton*, Volume 3, edited by Julius Goebel (1980)
- MCARS** = *Minutes of the Court of Albany, Rensselaerswyck and Schenectady* by Translated and Edited by A.J.F. Van Lear. Volume 2 (1928); Volume 3 (1932)
- NNR** = *New Netherland Register*, Volume 1, Number 1 (January, 1911)
- NYGBR** = *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*