

Chapter 1

Duck-Sanctuaries, The Reclaiming of Roosenburg, And The First Moerman of Holland

During the early part of the 16th century, the area between Maassluis and Brielle near the southern tip of Holland was a mass of shallow water, which virtually became dry land during low tide. The land presented ideal conditions for all types of wild ducks. Actually, these *eenden kooien* (duck-sanctuaries) were places in which duck farmers made their living by catching large numbers of fresh duck for the folk in nearby towns and villages. The farmer who earned his living in this way typically owned or rented 20 or 30 acres of lowlands heavily overgrown with willow trees and separated into sections by narrow ditches, all leading to one central pond conveniently ending in a narrow point. To the ducks, this was their feeding station. To the farmers lurking underneath the willow trees with their large nets, this was their livelihood.

Near the Johannes van Vliet farm—the farm where many years later my mother was born—there were two of these *eenden kooien*. We had one just one kilometer away from the farm I was born as well. Hunting by the general public was not allowed within these protected areas known as *bishoprics*. The farmers who made their living from such areas were empowered by the authorities to hand out fines to poachers transgressing these local laws. It was serious business to remove wild duck eggs from nests, catch baby ducklings, and so on! Yet I must here and now confess that centuries later, a young teenager named *Johannes Moerman* did these very things!

Certain *bisdommer* (horigen) people were among the first to build dikes around these shallow waters in an effort to create permanently dry land. Those who did so in this particular area between Maassluis and Brielle created a place that became known as "Old Rosenburg." A man named Willem Pietersz Moerman, born in 1573 at Blankenberg in Vlaanderen, was one of the pioneers who diked in the Rosenburg area.



For information discovered since this writing please click on: [editor's note](#)

GENERATION ONE:
Willem Pietersz Moerman
(1573 - 1648)

During the years of 1568—1648, the *Tachtig Jarige Oorlog* (The 80-Year War) raged from Spain to Holland and with it, widespread religious persecution. The name *Alva* brought as much fear into the hearts of the people of that time as the name *Hitler* did in World War II. Spain was seeking to rule the surrounding nations and their localized religion. With the Reformation proceeding at the same time, persecution was experienced by many.

One of those who fled during the 80-Year War was a young man named Willem Pijetersz Moerman van Blankenberg. After fleeing Vlaanderen in what is part of present-day Belgium due to religious persecution, W.P. Moerman stopped off at Sluis, Zeeuws Vlaanderen. A marriage registry book in Portugaal (a suburb of present day Rotterdam) contains the following entry:

Willem Pijetersz. Moerman van Blankenberg
and
Maritgen Rokus van Hoogvliet
have married
following the legal proclamation here at Poortegael in 1605.

An ancestor by the name of Samuel Moerman had written in some archives dated 1774 and kept in Maassluis that the first home built in Rosenburg was the Moerman home. It seems that immediately following his marriage, 32-year-old W.P. Moerman and his new wife moved to *Blankenberg* in Rosenburg and named it after the place of his origin. The name Blankenburg was later adopted by the county. In addition, a town by the same name was once there but had to make room for a massive ship-building yard and a huge chemical plant called *TCI*. For a number of years, studies have been done to build a tunnel under the waterway there. My friend, Piet van der Burgh, has been involved here. The project is called "The Blankenburg Tunnel." He was surprised to hear about the Moerman background to the name Blankenburg.

In 1621, W.P. Moerman instructed his notary public Johan Dwinglo of Vlaardingen to write a detailed testament. On the basis of this testament, it shows he had already become a rather wealthy farmer. In 1621, W.P.'s first wife *Maritgen* passed away in their Blankenburg home after just 16 years of marriage. Within a year, W.P. remarried with *Neeltje Jansdr. Block*.

A series of articles entitled "The History of Rosenburg Island" contains a host of invaluable information. The following is a translated excerpt:

"On April 18, 1586, father and son Dirck Adriaensz, and a few years later W.P. Moerman each received authorization of the Dutch authorities to lay dry the shallow places which from hereon shall be called "ROOSENBURG". They rented the territory for 27 years on the condition that 'the persons are obliged to dike-in a minimum of 50 gemeten lands (125 acres) for the payment of 15 cents per acre.' But when the allotted time had expired, they had laid dry not 125 acres, but over 285 acres of land!"

When W. P. Moerman took possession of the land-to-be, the land was registered in the name of his father and grandfather, probably because as a teenager he was considered too young to take title himself. But in time—and in the goodness of God—the land eventually became his full responsibility.



The Moerman Family Crest

In 1648, at the age of 75, a prosperous and blessed W.P. Moerman instructed that a coat of arms be designed for his name. This creation can actually be viewed in the museum at Rotterdam (Gemeente Archief, Mathenessenlaan 315, 3021 HL, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, Tel. 010-775166). Up until the time we emigrated, no one in our extended family had ever mentioned that a Moerman Family Crest existed for the simple reason that no one knew! In 1981, we visited the museum and learned some of the history connected with the coat of arms.

Following the death of W.P. Moerman, the crest was hung in W.P.'s home church in Zwartewaal. But during the French revolution in the late 18th century, French fanaticism with its ringing slogans of "Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood" forbade anyone to have a family Coat of Arms. This was when the Moerman Family Crest disappeared from the public scene. After the Revolution, the Crest was returned to the same church, where it hung for centuries more. The Crest was then damaged during World War II when Zwartewaal was occupied by Hitler's forces. Touch-up work on the Crest is evident.



Facts About The Moerman Family Crest

- height: 100 cm
- width: 78 cm
- painted on wood
- fitted in a simple frame
- bird: the moerbeij
- bush: the mulberry
- the castle signifies Blankenburg, W.P.'s home
- crest within a crest: for W.P.'s second wife (note her initials near the lilies)

- the silver castle signifies the mansion in heaven above
- three red lilies: The Trinity? The blood Christ?
- “1648”: the year W.P. Moerman was called to his Heavenly Home
- The photo of the family crest (above) was taken in the Rotterdam Museum in 1994.

The bottom part of the crest is called "Rouw Bord" (meaning “Notice of Sorrow”) Here it actually functions as a plaque giving W.P. Moerman’s personal testimony. It reads:

"Aandagtige overdenkinge over mijn wedervaren in deze bedroevende, lijdende en strijdende weerelt. Als Spaans freet gespuis heel Vlaanderen gingh kwelle, Zoo dat geen leeuw 'hem in't freetse mogt aanstelle, Zoo heeft daar boven nog ons honger zware plage, Daar bij nog zware pest schiere geslaage. Ik, die was jong geyaard, moest vluchten door dees nood, Zogt myn jeugdig hert te vrije van den dood. Ik ben in Holland geraakt, God beeft mij hier gegeven, Bevryd van straf en nood, genoeg om wel te leven. maar laas, mijn gans yeslagt is door dees nood verdreven, Dat nooit een straal daar van in It minste is verschenen. Joseph die was verkogt en buitenslans verdreven, Maar echter zyn geslagt is in't licht gebleven. Myn stam en afkomst was eertyds genaamt Moorman; Dit islt meest wat my hier van heugen kan. Terweil ik op It Yland myn woning niam met zorg, Zoo kreeg ik hier nogtans de Van: Van Blankenbury. Maar omdat myn afkomst niet blyve zou vergeten, Zoo gaat men my Moerman Van Blankenburg heeten, God geve dat ik Moerman Van Blankenburg sweven, In's hemels Blankenburg by God in ewigh leven."

The English translation is as follows:

“Give attentive reflection now concerning my experiences in this sad, suffering, and embattled world! When the cruel Spanish rabble tormented all of Flanders (modern day Belgium), it seemed that no lion could have brought about greater cruelty. We were plagued by severe famine and pestilence. Being very young, I was forced to flee for my life, seeking to rescue myself from certain death. In my flight, I landed in Holland. Here, God gave me freedom from my distress and abundant provision to live well.

But alas, many of my generation experienced this same distress and were not as fortunate as I. Not even a ray of them has anywhere appeared. Joseph was sold and driven away to a foreign land, yet the light of his generation remained with him. But my generation, known as Moerman, has not.

While on this island of Roosenburg, I built my home with care. Further, I was given here the additional name Van Blankenburg. In order that my heritage would not be forgotten, they decided to name me Moerman Van Blankenburg. May God give, that I, Moerman Van Blankenburg, may one day dwell in heaven's fortress of purity and light!”

(Note W.P.’s word play on *Blankenburg*, his town of origin in Belgium as well as a word that means “pure white and unstained,” an expression of his desire to dwell in the heavenly mansion above!)

Above the testimony section is the shape of a man's head who says *Zoekt wat boven is* which means “Look At The Things Above.” Below these words, we find a woman's head answering *Niet wat beneden is*, or “Not At The Things Below,” which echoes the Apostle Paul’s words in Philippians 3:20,

*“But our citizenship is in heaven.
And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

With the eyes of faith, we see W.P. Moerman among “the great cloud of witnesses” mentioned in Hebrews 12, urging us to throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and run the race set before us with perseverance! He’s urging us to *win the prize* of our heavenward calling!

Four centuries later, it is now *my* desire—along with my ancestor—that each one of our descendants remain steadfast and determined to run that race with eyes fixed on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith! There is no disappointment for those who do!

* * *

In a document dated July 3, 1652 (one month after the death of W.P.'s second wife *Neeltje*), the Notary Public of Maassluis, A. De Bijje, records the following children from W.P.'s first wife *Maritgen* who were still living at that time:

- Pieter Willemsz Moerman (later living at Brielle);
- Rochus Willemsz Moerman (Boonerskuis, Maasland);
- Jacop Willemsz Moerman, (later living at Zwartewaal);
- Fijntje Willemsdr Moerman, (who married Ary Cornelis Iselsteijn, a blacksmith, in Maasland);
- Fijtje (probably Maertje Willemsdr Moerman, (married Heijndrick Claesz, of Blankenburg);
- Barbera Willemsdr Moerman, (married Jochem Leendertsz Hekelingen).

Children living from W.P.'s second wife *Neeltje* mentioned in the same document include the following:

- **Jan Willemsz Moerman II (through whom our lineage descends);**
- Andries Willemsz Moerman;
- Jannetje Willemsdr Moerman.

In the church of Zwartewaal, records indicate that the following children were baptized: Jan on Dec. 3, 1623; Andries on Feb. 17 (1626?), and Jannetje on Nov. 10, 1630.



NOTE: Here and following, where there is no reference to where the individual lived or a date provided for marriage, we presume they probably died rather young.



GENERATION TWO: Jan Willemsz Moerman (1623-1693)

Jan Willemsz Moerman was baptized on March 12, 1623, in Blankenburg. He died in 1693 at the age of 70. He married three times. His first marriage was to *Willempje Pauwelsdr Hoogendijck*, who passed away in about 1665. Children from this marriage include the following:

- *Neeltje*, born (or baptized) in approximately 1652. Her first marriage to *Wiggert Doene Kamerman* (widower of *Maartje Jans*) lasted only from 1670 to 1672. Her second marriage took place sometime before 1680 to *Pieter Jansz Soetingb*.
- *Janneke*, baptized in Rosenburg in 1658. She married *Cornelis Leendertsz van der Plaat* somewhere around 1685.
- **Willem, baptized in 1660 (through whom our lineage descends).**
- *Paul*, baptized in Rosenburg in 1662.

It is probable that between 1652 and 1658 other children were born, but no baptismal records are available.

Jan Willemsz' second marriage was to *Elisabeth Ariens Neeldijk*, who died sometime between 1674 and 1676. Children from this marriage include the following:

- Arij, baptized in Rosenburg in 1667.
- Trijntje, baptized in 1669, but died young the same year.
- Gerrit, baptized in 1671, but also died the same year.
- Trijntje, baptized in 1672 (?) and later married Jan Doensz Sonneveld of Maasland in 1692.

Jan Willemsz' third marriage was to *Meintien Pieters Van Capelle*. Children from this marriage include the following:

- Pieter, baptized in Rosenburg in 1677, but died young;
- Pieter, baptized in Rosenburg in 1679, but also died young;
- Pieter, baptized in Rosenburg in 1680, growing up to marry *Jaapje Samuelsdr Den Ouden* in 1707.

(After the death of Jan Willemsz, she married *Jacob Joppe Berckel*, a widower with two children from Maasland who was previously married to *Jacquemijntje Rochusdr Moerman*.)



GENERATION THREE: Willem Jansz Moerman (1660- ??)

Willem Jansz Moerman, the oldest son of Jan Willemsz, was born in Rosenburg in 1660. In about 1682, he married *Maartje Cornelisdr Vermeer*, from Pijacker. Their children include the following:

- Jan, baptized in 1683 in Rosenburg.
- Cornelis, baptized in 1685; (he later married at Rosenburg to *Grietje Arendsdr Herweijer*).
- Japik (later known as Jacob), baptized in 1687 at Rosenburg and married in 1714 to *Magteld Tielemans Couwenhoven*, a daughter of Tielemans Cornelisz Couwenhoven and Neeltje Andriesdr Moerman.
- Ariaentje, baptized in Rosenburg in 1691.
- Paulus, baptized in Rosenburg in 1692.
- **Andries, baptized in Rosenburg in 1695**
- Pieter, baptized in Rosenburg in 1698



GENERATION FOUR:
Andries Willemsz Moerman
(1695 - ??)

Andries Willemsz Moerman was baptized in Rosenburg in 1695 and married to *Annetje Pankras Van Dijk* on December 17, 1719 in—you guessed it—Rosenburg! She was the daughter of Pankras Pietersz Van Dijk and Barbara Pietersdr from Pijnacker. They had ten children:

- Maartje, baptized in Rosenburg on February 25, 1720 (died November 28 1728).
- Pankras, baptized in Rosenburg on April 18, 1723 (married at Rosenburg on June 29, 1749 with *Huijgje Teiunsdr De Bruijn*, daughter of Teunis De Bruijn.
- Ariaantje, baptized in Rosenburg on May 7, 1724.
- Berber, baptized in Rosenburg on Oct. 14, 1725 (died Nov.11, 1733).
- **Willem, baptized in Rosenburg on December 25, 1726 (through whom our lineage descends).**
- Ariaentje, baptized in Rosenburg on Feb. 15, 1728.
- Maertge, baptized in Rosenburg on Feb. 5, 1730.
- Adriaantje, baptized in Rosenburg Sept. 25, 1731 (but died as an infant).
- Adriaantje, baptized in Rosenburg on Dec. 25, 1732 (died May 6, 1760).
- Pieter, baptized in Rosenburg on July 31, 1735.



GENERATION FIVE:
Willem Andriesz Moerman
(1726 - ??)

Willem Andriesz Moerman was baptized in Rosenburg on Christmas Day in 1726. He married at Vlaardingen on March 14, 1756, to *Neeltje Maartens Berkhout*, daughter of Maerten Berkhout and Adriaentje Kouwwinter. They had eleven children:

1. Annetje, baptized in Maasland on January 26, 1757. Her first marriage at Overschie was on September 5, 1779, with *Gerhard Herman Moerveld* from

- Aalten. Her second marriage was at Overschie on February 8, 1789 to *Dirk Langerwaard*.
2. Ariaantje, baptized in Maasland on March 12, 1758. She married at Vlaardingen on April 27, 1783, with *Jacob Heijmense Breederveld* and died at Vlaardingen on March 6, 1834.
 3. **Andries, baptized in Maasland on June 24, 1759, through whom our lineage descends.**
 4. Maarten, baptized in Maasland on August 31, 1760, married at Vlaardingen on June 14, 1789, with *Margritje Pijnacker* from Maasland.
 5. Cornelia;
 6. Trijntje was Cornelia's twin, also baptized in Maasland on February 09, 1763.
 7. Trijntje, baptized in Vlaardingen on August 29, 1764, married at Vlaardingen with Syme Van Rosse on March 25, 1787, died at Vlaardingen on November 15, 1802.
 8. Cornelis, baptized in Vlaardingen on Oct. 26, 1766, married in Vlaardingen on August 8, 1796, with *Dirkje Jacobsdr Poot*, widow of Jacob Jacobsz Van Der Burg, daughter of Jacob Poot and Pleuntje Kooij. (*Of special note: Cornelis was the ancestor of Dr. C. Moerman, M.D., the famous cancer prevention specialist of Vlaardingen*).
 9. Arij, baptized in Vlaardingen on February 12, 1769, married at Vlaardingen on May 12, 1805, with Trijtje Bregman.
 10. Jacob, baptized in Vlaardingen on March 1, 1772.
 11. Maartje, baptized in Vlaardingen on April 4, 1774. Maartje's first marriage was with widower Jan Van Der Waal. Her second marriage was to Jan Van Der Hout.



GENERATION SIX: ***Andries Moerman*** **(1759 - 1807)**

Andries Moerman was baptized at Maasland on June 24, 1759, married at Vlaardingen Ambt on May 25, 1788, with Pietertje Roodenburg, daughter of Dirk Roodenburg and Arentje Van Zanten. She died at Maasland on June 19, 1831. Andries died at Vlaardingen on October 31, 1807. They had seven children over their 19 years of marriage:

- Willem, baptized at Vlaardingen March 22 1789, married at Vlaardingen Ambt on April 26, 1818, with Ariaantje Maan. Willem died in Vlaardingen on October 4, 1861.
- Dirk, baptized at Vlaardingen on March 27, 1791, married at Vlaardingen on May 19, 1823, with Neeltje Bosch. Dirk died at Vlaardingen July 4, 1842.
- **Arend, born in Vlaardingen Ambt on January 2, 1794, through whom our lineage descends.**

- Neeltje, baptized in Vlaardingen Ambt on June 22, 1796. Her first marriage was on October 15, 1820, with Gerrit Van Der Gaag. Her second marriage was in Maasland on May 19, 1838, with Arij Hisman of Schipluiden. Neeltje died in Maasland on November 11, 1871.
- Pieter, born in Vlaardingen Ambt on December 11, 1798, married in Vlaardingen Ambt on June 25, 1836, with Hendrika Brugman (Bruggeman).
- Trijntje, born February 11, 1802, married April 21, 1830, with Abraham Van der Gaag.
- Arentje, born December 23, 1805, left Vlaardingen Ambt in 1829.



GENERATION SEVEN:

Arend Moerman

(1794 - 1874)

Arend Moerman was born in Vlaardingen on January 2, 1794, married at Vlaardingen Ambt on April 24, 1833, with Maria Van Der Kooij. Maria was born five years earlier than Arend, also in Vlaardingen, on September 8, 1799, the daughter of Simon Ridderusz Van der Kooij and Trijntje Poot. Arend died at Vlaardingen on January 12, 1874, at the age of 80. They had five children:

- Pietertje, born in Maasland on December 2, 1833, married at Maasland on August 6, 1858, with Simon Van Der Marel.
- Siemon, born in Maasland on November 9, 1835, married at Vlaardingen Ambt on April 13, 1866, with Gerritje Dijkshoorn. Gerritje died at Hillegersberg on February 3, 1902. Siemon died at Rotterdam on March 11, 1905.
- **Andries, born in Maasland on December 17, 1837—my grandfather!**
- Trijntje, born in Maasland August 31, 1839, married there on April 30, 1869, with Daniel Van Der Ende of Vlaardingen Ambt, son of Jacob Van Der Ende and Magteld Van De Lee.
- Neeltje, born in Maasland on March 9, 1842.



GENERATION EIGHT:

Andries Moerman

(1837 - 1898)

Andries Moerman was born in Maasland on December 17, 1837. His first marriage took place in Vlaardingen Ambt on April 26, 1872—at the age of 35—with *Antje Dijk shoorn*, daughter of Willem Pieterzn Dijkshoorn and Antje Vellekoop. Antje was born on December 4, 1874. At the time of marriage, she was 33.

An interesting historical note: Antje's father was married three times. After some years, he buried his first wife with whom he had 13 children. With his second wife he had three more children. After she passed away, he married again. With his third wife he had *another* ten children - 26 children in all! Incredibly, Antje—Andries' wife—was child #19! To add irony to incredulity, Andries and Antje had only *one* child—Antje Maria, born January 23, 1874, in Maasland. When she was just six months old, her mother died on July 1, 1874. Even more tragically, this little girl Antje Maria drowned at age seven (see below).

Andries' second marriage was to Willemina Noteboom, either in Pijnacker where Willemina was born and raised, or possibly in Maasland. Willemina was born on March 21, 1855. She was 22 at the time of the marriage while Andries was 39. The exact date of their marriage is not known. They had nine children:

- Arend, born in Maasland on May 8, 1878. On a Sunday morning, three years later, Arend drowned along with his older sister Antje Maria. Arend had fallen into a ditch and his older step-sister tried to rescue him, but drowned in the process.
- Neeltje, born in Maasland on September 18, 1879, died February 19, 1959.
- Cornelis, born in Maasland on December 19, 1880, died December 12, 1957.
- Arend, born in Maasland on February 9, 1883, died October 23, 1969 (a twin brother died at birth).
- **Marinus, born in Maasland on July 9, 1886. (This is my father! He passed away at Schipluiden on July 22, 1968.)**
- Antje Maria, born in Maasland on September 16, 1887, died July 19, 1972.
- Christiaan, born in Maasland on January 23, 1890, died June 6, 1954.
- Simon, born in Maasland on December 20, 1891, died October 15, 1968.

Andries, my grandfather, died in 1898 at the age of 61 from a massive heart attack. My dad, Marinus, was just 13 years old at the time. They were milking cows together. My grandfather was checking to see whether my dad had milked the cow properly. He sat down on his milking-stool and suddenly fell against my dad. And he went to be with the Lord—just like that.

My grandmother, Willemina, died on March 13, 1931, just prior to her 77th birthday, having been a widow for 34 years. I was eight years old and clearly recall my parents getting ready to attend the funeral (or possibly to meet with relatives to make the necessary arrangements). My grandmother I recall as a very kind, soft spoken, and sweet woman. I remember visiting her on Christmas Day, displaying our little Christmas booklets we had received during the annual Sunday School program!



GENERATION NINE:
Marinus Moerman
(1886 - 1968)

Marinus Moerman and Antje Van Vliet were married in Maasland on May 1, 1913, just one year before World War I broke out. My mother was born in Maasland on July 9, 1886, the daughter of Jobannis van Vliet and Maartje Kalisvaart. (See van Vliet roots). They had seven children:

- Andries, born on September 2, 1914 (born in Schipluiden);
- Maartje, born on January 13, 1917 (born in Schipluiden);
- Wilhelmina, born on December 12, 1918 (born in Schipluiden);
- Petronella, born on March 4, 1921 (born in Schipluiden);
- **Johannes, born on July 1, 1922 (that's me!)** (born in Schipluiden);
- Neeltje, born on May 6, 1924 (born in Schipluiden);
- Jacob, born on October 10, 1925 (born in Schipluiden).



GENERATION TEN:
Johannes Moerman
(1922 – 1998 date of death added by son Marinus)

Johannes Moerman X, born July 01, 1922, married Cornelia Willemina van Leeuwen XI, born April 20, 1925, married March 10, 1948. Children born of the marriage of John and Corrie:

- Marinus (Murray), January 13, 1949 (Chatham, Ontario);
- Cornelis Jacob (Jack), October 24, 1950 (Chatham, Ontario);
- Anne Margory (Anne), October 02, 1953 (Chatham, Ontario);
- John, July 26, 1956 (Exeter, Ontario);
- James Peter (Jim), January 25, 1960 (Cambridge, Ontario);
- Andrew Nicolas (Andy), October 23, 1961 (Edmonton, Alberta);
- Stacy May Holloway, April 27, 1969 (Pincher Creek, Alberta);
- Donald Russell Holloway (Russ), July 15, 1970 (Pincher Creek, Alberta).

A Commentary on
Divine Providence and Sovereign Purpose

And so, ten generations after Willem Pietersz Moerman van Blankenburg left his homeland in Belgium and made a new beginning in the Netherlands, Corrie and I made a move of similar significance. Like our progenitor Willem, Corrie and I have crossed waters and arrived in a new

land—Canada. Although we realize it was for different reasons, we have been led to look with new appreciation at some very old doctrines—God's Sovereignty and Providence.

Just look at what happens when *one individual is led to leave the place of his ancestors!* Who but God can foresee what such a move will bring about? To a lesser extent, we also see this in terms of moving East to West within Canada. Every move we were led to make has determined who and where our children were to marry and settle and raise *their* families.

Our forefather left a strongly Roman Catholic country. There is little reason to doubt that his family was Catholic as well. But whether he was part of the tradition that centuries ago had the priest walking ahead of a casket being carried to the cemetery, shouting in Latin, "*Sic transit gloria mundill!*" (The glory of this world is passing away!), or whether Willem had fallen for the lie of indulgences as expressed by Tetzells' famous sales pitch, "*When the money falls in the treasure chest, watch the soul leap into heaven*", we shall never know.

But in May of 1994, Corrie and I visited the area in Belgium where W.P. Moerman was born and raised. The Blankenburg telephone book listed a small number of families by our name. The city of Bergen—near Blankenburg—listed approximately 50 families by the name Moerman! When we conducted an informal telephone survey to inquire about their faith, we were told unequivocally, "*everyone around here is Roman Catholic!*"

We, therefore, assume that soon after his arrival in Holland, our early ancestor Willem P. Moerman accepted the Reformation Confessions and became part of the predominant faith of the area. For a boy barely a teenager, this would not have been difficult. As far as we are able to determine, there are *no* Roman Catholic Moerman families in the Rosenberg area, despite their having lived there for nearly 400 years!

Once again, we note that when we move—whether involuntarily or by our own free will—its effect is potentially far reaching! The lives of future generations *hinge upon what we do!* This surely speaks of God's Sovereignty and Providence! As a favorite hymn testifies:

*God moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.
You fearful saints, fresh courage take: The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break with blessings on your head.*

*Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.
His purposes will ripen fast, Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste, But sweet will be the flower.*

*Blind unbelief is sure to err And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter, And He will make it plain.*



Questions To Ponder

Intriguing questions remain:

- Was Willem Pietersz the oldest, youngest, or somewhere in the middle of his family? Had some or all of his siblings succumbed to the pestilence, persecution, and hunger of the 80-Year War? Were his parents still living at the time of his departure? Was one or both of them already seriously ill?
- Could it be that his parents actually *encouraged* him to leave and helped him make the heroic efforts to escape? Is it too much to conjecture that, seeing the devastating situation of war, sickness, pestilence, and hunger, that Willem's parents said to their beloved son, "Son, why don't you try to cross the waters with the gracious help of God? We'll be praying for your safety day and night. May God protect, bless, guide, direct, and keep you. Farewell, our son. Perhaps our God will grant us the opportunity to be re-united, if not now, then when we are with the Savior above." Were Willem's parents concerned about preserving the family name? We do not know. God knows.
- In his testimony sketch, W.P. Moerman laments the fact of never being able to see any of his *geslagt* (relatives) anymore. This raises another question: if some (or all) of his family had still been alive when he left, would he not have tried to re-establish contact with them—especially when he became a man of means? Or is his lament indicative of what he knew to be the truth; namely, that none of his immediate family were living?



I, Johannes Moerman, am GENERATION TEN. And now, I would like to leave you, my children (GENERATION ELEVEN) and you my grandchildren (GENERATION TWELVE), with the challenge to be a *new* family tree, just like Willem Pietersz Moerman Van Blankenburg, born in 1573. I challenge each of you to be a God-fearing man or a God-fearing woman. Consider Psalm 16:5-6 . . .

5 LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure.

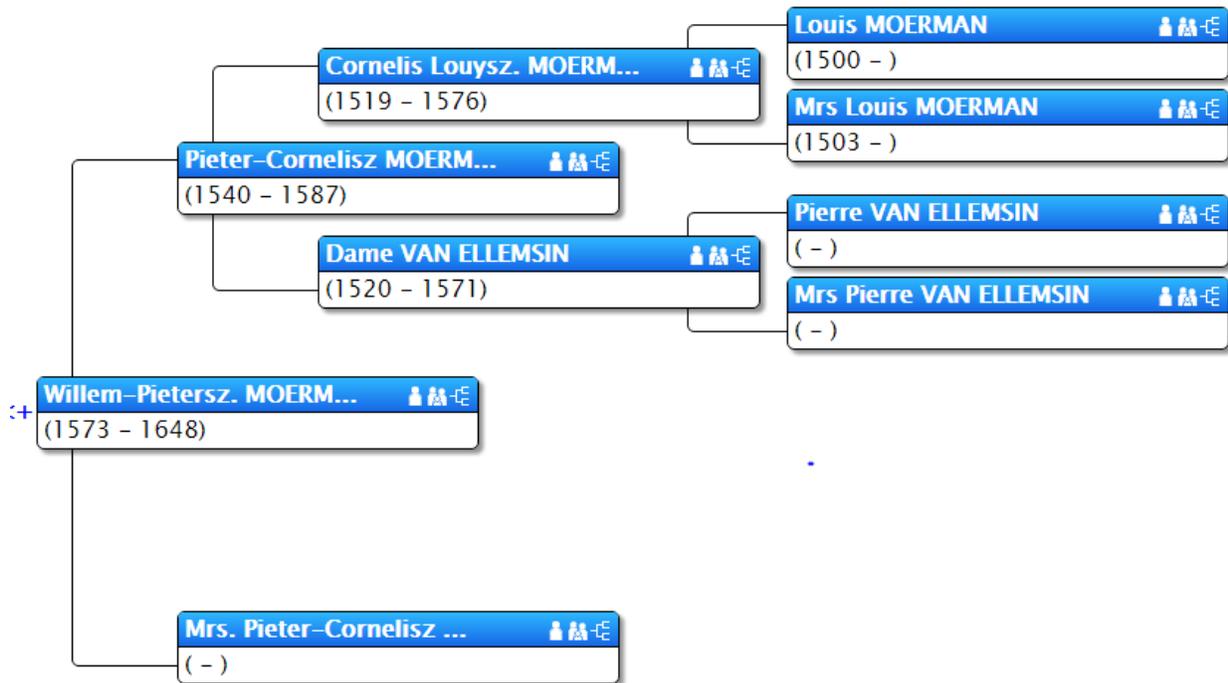
6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. (NIV)

The greatest goal of life should not be personal happiness, but meaning. It is *meaning* that produces purpose, wholeness, and satisfaction. Life becomes meaningful only when we live it for someone greater than ourselves. There is only One Person worthy of our life. Your life. My life.

His name is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. When we give ourselves to Him, following and serving Him in all we do, in all we are, in all the places we go, He builds meaning into our lives.

Whether you consciously recognize it or not, each of you have already set out to "write" your own life-story. You began writing when you were born. Of course, no one is immediately aware of this. Neither were we, your parents and grandparents. We trust, however, that reading these pages will *make* you aware. We came to see that this is the overall purpose of working on our family tree. In the Holy Scriptures, we find that genealogies are given in order to more clearly trace out God's gracious promises, goodness, protection, power, love, and mercy down through the centuries. We trust that each of you will help us accomplish this, as we together unite in the faith of our ancestors.

Editor's note (by Murray Moerman, son of the author John Moerman, on April 6, 2016): Since posting the work of my father onto the internet I've been contacted by several relatives of whom I'd been unaware. One of these, who also traces his roots to Willem Pietersz Moerman (1573 - 1648), has done further work, finding also who I believe are this man's grand-parents. The chart looks like this:



<http://sites.rootsmagic.com/EDC1/pedigree.php#2914> (accessed April 6, 2016)