

THE OLD ONES IN OUR FAMILY

In the recent book written by Bud and John E. VDB (VanDenBerg Family History), there is extensive information about our historical roots in Holland and the individuals we came from. This website chapter is a quick summary of that information. As always, we are indebted to Wilma J. VanDenBerg who compiled the 600+ page book about the family, including all the branches.

Our earliest recorded ancestors: We have no information about any family pre-1600. In the earliest days, there were no cameras, no computers, no internet! From old records in the Dutch towns of Doornspik and Elberg (seen here), is listed the name of Jacob, born in 1685. At that time, last names were not developed or in common use. Jacob's grandson Gerrit, born in 1772, was the first to have a last name of Vande berg, which means "from the mountains".



Why "from the mountains"? Holland had become a world power and the seaports needed workers. Groups of peasants were forced to relocate to the seaside cities, including Doornspik and Elberg. Our ancestors lived in hills northwest of these cities, and certainly lived in tiny groups or on individual farms. Of course, there are no mountains in Holland but the low hills were referred to as mountains.

These peasants were given the last name Vande berg to show where they were from. Over the centuries, the last name evolved into many forms and "VDB or VanDenBerg" is used in this website.

Immigration: Due to the culture of Holland, poverty, including food shortages and religious persecution, Dutch residents began to head to America. In our family, Jan (John) VDB, born in 1845, was the first to come. He was the son of Beert and Aaltje VDB, who quickly followed their son. Now, a several hour flight takes us from Amsterdam to New York City. Then, a brutal ocean voyage lasting over two weeks was the only way to go. On this journey, Beert and Aaltje brought their children and traveled in a group with other family and friends.

One of the friends, Rijk Sneller, sent a letter home describing the voyage which included the following information:

Many of the older people and children got diarrhea. Seven people died on the boat. After 17 days on the ocean, they arrived in New York on March 30, 1866...the boat trip was so cold that it weakened their condition.

Later, Rijk said that not for \$1,000 would he make the trip again, as three of his own children perished on the trip. It is hard to imagine his grief, and the grief of our great-great grandparents Beert and Aaltjie, who also lost a child (Gerrit) due to the trip.

Our VDB Great-great Grandparents. Here are early photos of Beert and Aaltjie:



These photos taken about 1860

They were quickly established in Wisconsin, with the help of their son Jan. They later moved to Iowa. Jan became a wealthy farmer. He was known as “King John” for his practice of helping Dutch immigrants come to America, who had to repay him by working on his farms for a number of years. Aaltjie died in 1875. Seven years later, Beert married Geertje, a widow. She had 5 daughters, which grew the overall family to 13 children. Beert died in 1904 at the age of 82.

Our VDB Great Grandparents. Our VDB Great grandparents were Andrew and Tryntje VanDenBerg.



Andrew and Tryntje about 1895

Andrew's parents were Beert and Aaltjie. Andrew was 16 when the family came to America. Andrew was born in 1850 and died in Orange City in 1927. Tyntje was the daughter of Mr. Sipma, who was one of the first white founders of the State of Iowa. Andrew and Tryntje had 10 children who lived to adulthood. Great grandpa Andrew had many sons, who as they aged became the labor force to work their farm. Family lore says that when Great grandpa Andrew wanted to go to town, he would order one of his sons to get a horse, pull up to the buggy, and get it ready for him. He would take the reins, ride into town, and when returning would pull up in front of the farmhouse, and drop the reins, get out and one of the boys would run out and take care of the horse and buggy. **One of the sons doing this work was our grandfather Charles!** Andrew died in 1927, and Tryntje died in 1931.

Our VDB Grandparents. Our grandparents (for the many VDB first cousins) were Maggie and Charles VDB. Maggie was born in Sioux Center, Iowa in 1885, and married Charles in 1904. Charles was born in Newkirk, Iowa in 1878. He died in 1958 at the age of 80. In the course of writing the recent VDB book, authors Bud and John interviewed dozens of family members. When talking about Grandma Maggie, every interviewed person said the same thing: She was the most wonderful, kind, and loving person they had ever met. She was truly the matriarch of our family. Grandpa Charles was seen as a bit gruff, opinionated, but also devoted to his family. Our grandparents lived through some tough times, including two homes destroyed by fire, the loss of their ranch in Crawford, the death of a child (Jeanette), and poverty. Through it all, they served as the anchor for our family.



Maggie and Charles
Wedding Photo 1904



Maggie and Charles in the mid
1950's



Grandpa Charles and his
son Lester about 1957

**The Rozeboom Branch of our family:
Maggie was a Rozeboom!**

Our Great-great grandparents (Rozeboom). Our great-greats were named Beert Rozeboom and Driesje VanLoo. We don't have much information nor photos of them. They lived for a time in Oldebroek, near the ocean and near the hometowns of the VDBs.



The Rozebooms eventually moved nearer Geldorf, close to the VDBs. There, the Rozebooms and the VDBs became friends. They immigrated as part of the larger group of Dutch immigrants from that part of the Netherlands. In the mid 1850's, the family merged for the first time when one of Beert's children (Hannes) roomed with a member of the VDB family.

Our Great grandparents. One of Beert and Driesje's children was our Grandma Maggie's father Jan Rozeboom, who was born in 1840. Jan married Hermina Schipper in 1863. Hermina had 13 children before dying in child birth in 1880. Jan immigrated and moved to Iowa and eventually married Jannetje (Jenny) and together had 8 more children. When Jan died in 1930, his 16 living children were in the room where he passed.



Jan Rozeboom, our
Great-grandfather



Jenny Rozeboom, our
Great-grandmother

