

## THE FRIESIAN DESCENT OF MY DISTANT SECOND COUSIN JANE FONDA

Some time ago, on April 5th 1986, Kerst Huisman wrote an article in the Leeuwarder Krant (= L.Newspaper) about the ancestors of the actress Jane Fonda. He did so as a reaction to an article in 'The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record' of July 1984. In America it had been found that the Fondas descend from the couple Jelle (Jelis) Douwes Funda and Hester Douwes; coming from Amsterdam, they took up their residence in what is now called Albany (New York) in 1651.

Jelle (Jelis) and Hester had taken out the banns in Amsterdam on January 29th 1641. About Jelle it is stated that he came from 'Agum' and was living as a blacksmith's hand on Bickerseiland in Amsterdam. Jelle signed this certificate with 'Jelle Douwes'. In Amsterdam four children were baptized: Douwe, Giertien, Sara and Abraham. In birth register of one of the children the father is called Jelis Douwes. In 1651 the whole family set off for America and there Jelle Douwes lived under the name of Douwes Fonda.

So Jelle Douwes came from Agum. You should know Agum is a very small community and the people living there are quickly counted. Nine farmer's families and a schoolteacher with his wife. There were no tradespeople; for everything needed on the farms you had to go to Idaard or to Roordahuizen. With the help of the register of birth & death you can easily solve the problem. Jelle Douwes' father must have been a certain Douwe Sjoerds. And then you are confronted with a problem: there is a misprint or a reading mistake in the register of births. There are more of them in it and as genealogists we have to give due consideration to that fact.

Someone called Douwe Sjoerds in Agum is nowhere to be found in the archives of Ideradeel from about 1640. It turns out you should read 'Douwe Everts'. This man lived on Hornemazathe, not on Jornemazathe ('zathe' = a kind of big farmhouse) as recorded in the register. Douwe Everts and Wytscke Dirxdr ('dr' = daughter, so: 'daughter of Dirc') leased that farm, one of the biggest in Agum (about 45 acres), from Luts Iges Siccama (wife of 'grietman' Saco Fockens)

(NB- 'grietman' = the head of the administration of justice and government of a grietenij = a local district)

Abraham van Roorda and from Aelcke van Ockinga (widow of grietman Ernst van Aylva).

The first entry of Douwe is in 1611. He and his mother terminated the tenancy of land of Tjalling Oenes Bangama. 1) As plenipotentiary of Agum he last signed a document of the 'grietenij' Idaarderadeel in 1664. 2)

Between 1623 and 1664 he represented his village seven times as a village proxy. On all these occasions he signed 'Douwe Eewerts'. This shows he was a active man for a long time. It also shows he became almost 80 years old.

Moreover I found Douwe Everts mentioned as guardian and uncle of Foppe Dirck's child, living in the community of Franje near Marsum (1628)3). Douwe's wife, Wytske Dirckdr, was apparently Foppe's sister. And in 1654, as guardian of a child of a certain Siuerdt Sibrens, he took legal action at the Court of Friesland against Jelle Beyma from Burdaard. (=Birdaard)4)

On July 27th 1670 the seven children of Douwe and Wytske divide the inheritance of their parents; which was at the same time the draft of a list of claims one child had from the other. The children also indicated the expenses after their father's death. As early as July 16th 1669 money was paid for 'items used at Douwe Evert's funeral'. The other bills had all been handed in later. Such as for 'the rent of the black sheet on Douwe Evert's doodvat(=coffin), a barrel op 'wip'(=beer) and half a barrel of beer and breadrolls consumed at the funeral. 5)

It was in the middle of summer and there were quite a few children, each had his own household and moreover there were quite a lot of other relatives.

Jelle (Jelis) Douwes isn't mentioned in this division of the estate. Of course that wasn't possible anymore; he had already died (we know now) in 1659.

Maybe his parents gave him some money on his departure to America.

The seven children staying here in Friesland were mentioned. They were:

Tietscke, Ype, Ewert, Mints, Dirck, Titie and Antie. Last named Antie Douwes, probably the youngest, married Sytse Jelles, my direct paternal ancestor in 1655.

That's why I wrote 'my distant second cousin Jane Fonda'. The other brothers and sisters you can find in the following genealogical survey.

Brothers of Douwe Everts were: Benedictus Everts and Hessel Everts. Benedictus still lived in Agum in 1611, in Oldeboorn in 1625; at the time he was guardian of the children of Hessel Everts, living near Sneek. So when you know Douwe Everts had a brother named Benedictus, it is evident that Evert Bendicxz, living in Agum in 1578, was their father.8) In 1609 he is mentioned for the last time. At that time he was Greolt's and Botke's Heerckens guardian, but more about that later.

Evert took on lease a farm at Agum. In 1604 it is stated he had to pay an annual rent of 3 Dutch goldguilders to Sicke Tialling (Palsma) at Wirdum. 9) Recent research has shown that Sicke Tiallings was grandfather of the aforesaid wife of grietman Fockens. In other words: Evert Benedictus also lived on Horne-mazathe at Agum. Now the boy's name Benedictus is not a frequent one. I was really surprised to find a certain Evert Benedictus as a guardian in the grietenij Kollumerland in the draft of Syurdt Benedictus' inheritance in Lytsewald.10) Later I also found that Evert had been appointed guardian of Syurdt's children. Then he is called 'Evert Benedictus te (=at) Agum in Idaerde-radeel'. 11) If you are keen on a possible chance of finding such a person in Kollumerland and you are a bit lucky, you do find something once in a while.

In 1607 Evert Benedictus is mentioned as guardian of the late Pieter Benedictus' son at Boerum. 12) He was appointed as such on August 25th. His fellow guardian was Taecke Eues at Oosterlittens. And in 1604 Evert, Pieter and Jelijs, sons of Benedictus and as uncles defended the rights of the six children of the late Willem Benedictus from the Stienharst (name of a farm?) near Lytsewold in a legal dispute with Auck Tialledr, the widow, then married to Dirck Hendricx. 13) Jelijs Benedictus who is called 'bedienaar van het Goddelijke Woord te Boesum' (= minister of the Divine Word at Boesum), wasn't able to be present, but Evert and Pieter had his proxy. In 1614 Jelis Benedictus -he himself signed: Gellius Accronius- became guardian of the children of He(e)rcke Greolts and Tyed Benedictusdr at Himpens. 14) Obviously he had succeeded his brother Evert to this position after the latter's death. His widow Trijn Wesseldr accounted for her husband's guardianship in 1615. Jelijs Benedictus, minister at Boazum, had also become guardian in 1600 of the children of Rintze Sybes and the late Barber Wesselsdr, living on the Nijland (=new land) at Boerum. 16) Some of the sons of that Boazumer minister later became ministers too. But it hasn't become clear to me why Jelis and his sons named themselves Ac(c)ronius.

One of the sons of Tyed Benedictusdr was a certain Ruerd. Are these links with Ruerd Bernardus Acronius, who was a minister at Britsum from 1580 till 1599 ? According to the genealogical register Ruerd's father may be a son of Joannes Acronius, professor of medicine in Basel (deceased 1563 in Basel), who was born at Akkrum. But only Jelijs Benedicti and his descendants used the surname Acronius. However if you know that the three brothers Willem, Pieter and Syurdt Benedictus each lived on a farm in Kollumerland, a fourth brother at Agum and a sister at Himpens, it is easy to picture a father who lived or had lived in Kollumerland and had connections with the region around Leeuwarden. And in that case there is one Benedictus who answers this biographical sketch, viz. Benedictus Jacobs. This man was born on the Nieuweland (=new land) near Leeuwarden as the son of Jacob Harmens and Bot Hennedr. Before 1558 he was already married to Aecht Eernstdr with whom he lived at Kollum. 18) He is mentioned by Reitsma 19), who reports that he had some land in use from the parsonage and that he brought in the property of the Sacramentsleen (=fief of the Sacrament ?). Benedictus himself also held some of that fief. It looks very much as if he moved to Leeuwarden shortly after 1580. His estate was drawn up in 1582. In this document only one son is mentioned, Jacob. Harmen Jacobs in Harlingen (an uncle) and Toenij's Symens in Leeuwarden became his guardians. His widow is mentioned as late as 1595. 21) She then lived in the 'Weard' (= a street name ??)

For years Jacob Harmens and Both Hennedr ran a farm 'aan het Galgadiep' (= at the canal of Galga), where the Swette (=a stream or river name) and the canal to Harlingen meet.

They leased this farm from Joest van Burmania; they also leased some pieces of land around it and some land in Ingelum and Deinum. 22)

Jacob and Both had seven children, viz. Benedictus, Aeff, Ricxt, Eelck, Sybbel, Lysbeth and Johannes. On May 17th 1556 Jacob made his will. The names Bot and Aeffcke you encounter again with the children of Tied Benedictusdr and the name Sibbel with the children of Willem Benedictus. This makes plausible a family relation of Evert Benedictus with Benedictus Jacobs. It's not a proof of course.

I don't know anything about the descent of Jacob Harmens, but I do about Both Henedr. She came from Lytsewierum from a farm 'opter Heyde' (= a place on the moor), where her parents Henne Jeltens and Sibbel farmed as early as 1511. 23) Both is mentioned in 1557 together with her husband and her brothers Ulbe, Jelte, Hette and Oelcke and her sister Anna.

A closer investigation into the family name of Fonda or Funda has not yielded any results. In not a single case has the name got anything to do with one of the Agumer farmhouses. The farm on which Jelle (Jelis) Douwes Fonda was born, is called Idema or Hornema, as I described above. That farm was situated 'oppe Horne' (=near a canal named Horne?) and from there you could in all probability reach Grouw by ship by 'dat Hoerne diep...' (=that Horne canal to...) 25)

But it does remain a remarkable name anyway; a name which -as Huisman has correctly stated- fits in excellent by the names Banda, Ronda and Sinda which occur in Kollumerland. The thought has run through my head that Fonda might be a corruption of 'Foynghe'. The fief that Benedictus Jacobs administered in Kollum in 1580, was also known as the St.-Anthonius fief or Foynghe fief. To make the mystery greater still: In Agum there lived about 1665 a procurator fiscal (??? public prosecutor/ tax official???) from Idaarderadeel named P. Agonda. 27)

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