

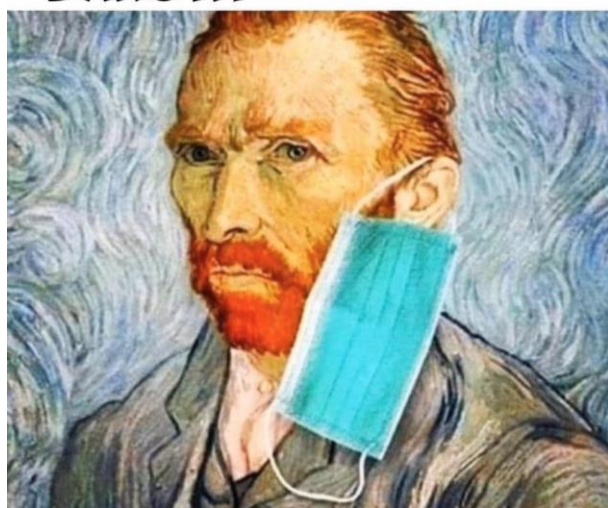
# **DUTCH-AUSTRALIAN GENEALOGY GROUP**

NEWSLETTER August 2020

Hello Everybody

Welcome to the Newsletter of the Dutch Australian Genealogy Group for August 2020

## **DANG IT!**



Due to the recent outbreaks of COVID-19 we felt that we had no choice but to make the necessary decision to cancel the meeting originally scheduled for August. While we all hope the COVID-19 pandemic will have subsided by November, uncertainty remains unacceptably high and Protecting the health, safety, and well-being of our members is paramount. Put simply, cancelling the D.A.G.G. meeting was the right thing to do during this difficult time. Together, we are facing a truly unprecedented situation. The global coronavirus pandemic is affecting all our families, our businesses, our communities, and our way of life.

Stay safe.

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## **AMID THE PANDEMIC, A FAMILY LEARNS THEIR NEIGHBORS ARE THEIR LONG-LOST RELATIVES**

*By Caitlin Huson*

When Kjetil Njoten and his wife, Zoe Leigh-Njoten, along with their son, moved from London to Los Angeles a few years ago for Kjetil's job at a TV network, they spent their first year trying to find the perfect neighborhood to put down roots. Last summer, they bought a house in La Crescenta, a community 15 miles outside of L.A. It would take them months, and a pandemic, to discover that family roots had already

been planted by long-lost relatives living four doors down.

The Njotens had met some neighbors in passing, but it wasn't until California's coronavirus stay-at-home order in March that the Njotens had a chance to really get to know the people who lived near



them. During a “social distancing happy hour” outside on their street in early April, the Njotens struck up a conversation with Erik and Jen Strom, who live four houses away.

Because Kjetil, 45, is originally from Norway and Erik, 38, has Norwegian ancestry, they started discussing Norwegian heritage. Jen, 37, said she had casually looked into her husband’s family history in the past but stopped when she was unable to locate Newton Island, where her husband’s Norwegian family was supposedly from.

Kjetil and Zoe joked that it could be Njoten Island, the tiny speck of an island northwest of Bergen, Norway’s second-largest city. Kjetil grew up in Njoten, and it’s from there that his family derived its surname. The island, Kjetil said, is three miles long and one mile wide and has a population of about 30 people.

They said it is often pronounced as Newton in English. But it is spelled “Njøten” in Norwegian and pronounced nyuh-ten.

“When [Jen] said ‘Newton,’ I thought, ooh, maybe!” said Zoe, 46. “It would be a ridiculous coincidence. Ridiculous. But maybe it’s Njoten!” That night, Kjetil emailed his mother in Norway, asking her to do some sleuthing. She looked at her own family records, and by the time Kjetil woke up the next morning, she had replied. Not only was Erik’s family from the same island, but the two men shared the same great-great-grandfather. In fact, the home that Kjetil grew up in once belonged to that great-great-grandfather, Jacob Njoten.

This was too momentous to share over text. The Njotens asked the Stroms to walk over to their house, and while standing at a safe distance under the Njotens’ covered porch, Kjetil said: “Hey, good news!

You are from the island, but not only that, we are related!”

The four of them stood there for a moment. Then there were cries of disbelief and tears.

“We were ecstatic!” Jen said. “None of us can believe it,” Zoe said. They resisted the urge to run over and hug each other.

Having made the discovery during a pandemic is a double-edged sword, Erik said. “It’s given us an exciting thing during this difficult time,” Erik said. “But having it happen during this time also means we can’t do what we would like to. We can’t hug or have dinner together or go in each other’s homes.”

But, as Jen pointed out, maybe it took something like this life-altering event to bring them together.

“We wonder how long it would have been [for us to make this connection] if we didn’t have this reason to slow down from our regular life,” she said.

The discovery would have been amazing at any time, said Kjetil, but to uncover it during the lockdown was “such a bright light in what is a pretty uncertain and worrying time.”

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25/04/2020 A California family learns their neighbors are their Norwegian relatives - The Washington Post

The best part for both families is what this means for the youngest generation — their children.

Monty Njoten, 10, and Emma Strom, 4, will grow up as cousins living just 100 yards apart.

As European expats, the Njotens have missed having family close by, and of all the neighborhoods and houses they could have picked in the Los Angeles area, Zoe said:

“We end up living on a street next to these people originally from this tiny island [in Norway]. It’s crazy! It’s beautiful.”

As they wait for coronavirus isolation to end, the Njotens and Stroms chat through their new family

WhatsApp thread, swapping recipes, photos and family stories. The Njotens showed the Stroms a framed aerial photograph of the idyllic island, which includes the farmhouse where their great-great-grandfather — and 100 years later, Kjetil — lived.

This discovery prompted Erik to ask his mother, who also lives in La Crescenta, more about their family. He got some genealogy documents from her, and she showed him a family history book that commemorated a large reunion on Njoten Island in the 1990s that some of Erik’s relatives attended.

Among the scanned photographs is a group picture that includes a young Kjetil. “That blew our minds a bit,” Kjetil said.

The spiral-bound family history book also holds the lyrics to a “welcome song” from the July 1996 reunion, all about their great-great-grandfather Jacob’s farm and family on Njoten Island. A verse mentions that Erik’s great-grandfather Andreas “bid farewell and sailed west for U.S.A.” in 1896.

That’s where the family history splits between continents. No one could have predicted there’d be another reunion in 2020 in an American neighborhood more than 5,000 miles from that farmhouse in Norway.

The Njotens and Stroms are hopeful that a group trip to Njoten Island will be possible sometime soon, but in the meantime, they’re busy making plans to celebrate Norwegian Constitution Day, an official public holiday observed May 17. But if the California stay-at-home order is still in effect then, they’ll turn their sights to a holiday that’s still new to the Njotens — Thanksgiving.

“We have American family now,” Zoe said.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/04/24/amid-pandemic-family-learns-their-neighbors-are-their-long-lost-relatives/?fbclid=IwAR29gA...> 1/8

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## **4 THINGS TO EVALUATE IN YOUR GENEALOGY**

*By Amy Johnson Crow*

“Evaluate your sources” is almost a mantra of genealogy. It’s good advice, but it doesn’t quite tell the full story. If you’re evaluating only the source, you’re stopping a bit short. Here are 4 things you need to take a look at when evaluating your genealogy so you get an accurate picture.

### **WHAT DO WE NEED TO EVALUATE IN OUR GENEALOGY?**

The phrase “evaluate your sources” is a bit of shorthand. There are 4 different, yet related, things that you need to consider.

#### **1. THE SOURCE**

Yes, you do need to evaluate the source. But it’s important to keep in mind what a “source” really is. A source is simply whatever you use to get information. Did you look at a birth record? That’s your source. Did you look at a database? That’s your source. Did you use a tombstone? That’s your source.

Did you talk to Uncle Henry? He’s your source.

There are two basic types of sources: *original* and *derivative*. An original source is the first creation of that particular record. A derivative source is something derived from other sources. So, the marriage record in the county courthouse: original. A database or a book that’s an index to those marriage records: derivative.

Generally speaking, it’s best to get back to the original whenever possible. Sometimes that’s as easy as clicking through to view the image on Ancestry, FamilySearch, or MyHeritage, rather than just relying on what is on the results page when you do a search. (Though some would argue with me, I generally accept a good digital image as an acceptable surrogate for the record on paper.)

The problem with relying on derivative sources is that they often don’t have as much information as the original. Take census records for example. When you search for your ancestor in the census on your favorite genealogy website, that results page only give you part of the information. Even if it does list everything for the entire household, you don’t see who the neighbors are.

And with derivatives, there’s always a chance that an error has crept in, whether that’s a typo or something that was read incorrectly.

#### **2. INFORMATION**

Information is what the source actually says. Literally, the words and other symbols on the source.

There are two types of information: *primary* and *secondary*. It refers to the informant. If the informant would have had first-hand knowledge, it’s primary. Otherwise, it’s secondary.

Really, all this is another way of asking, “Did he or she know what they were talking about?” Think about how long it took to record the information. The longer it takes to record something after an event, the more likely that memory will fail.

Also consider the motivations of the informant. Is there a reason to lie? (It happens!) Is this a record



that the person would really want to get right.... Or is it something that they didn't necessarily care about? That, too, can play a part in the accuracy of the information.

### 3. EVIDENCE

Evidence, as we're talking about it here, can be tricky to think about, as evidence changes with the question that you're asking.

There are two types of evidence: *direct* and *indirect*. Direct evidence spells out the answer to your question. Indirect evidence is where you need to infer the answer.

Evidence changes with the question you're asking. What does that mean? Think about the 1870 census.

Let's say you're trying to identify all of the children of your great-great-grandfather. You find him in the 1870 census. He's the head of household and in that household, there's also an adult woman, and three children under the age of 12. That's indirect evidence that they are his children. It isn't actually spelled out in the 1870 census how those other people in the household are related to the head of that household.

On the other hand, if your question was "Where was my great-great-grandfather living in 1870?" then that census is direct evidence. It's spelled out right there.

The tricky part about evidence is that we can get into a bit of trouble with indirect evidence, when we start to read too much into the record, or we interpret it incorrectly.

### 4. HOW DOES IT FIT?

When you're evaluating something that you've found, you shouldn't stop with evaluating that one record by itself. How does it fit with the other records that you already have? We tend to put more credence on something that gives us the answer that we're looking for or that we're expecting. But if that record conflicts with other records that you have, then you'll need to resolve that conflict.

If you're evaluating only your sources in genealogy, you're stopping too soon.

It all works together.

You could have a record that gives you direct evidence — it spells out the answer — but the information is incorrect. A secondary source might give you accurate information, but it turns out to be incomplete. You could have a record that seems to give you the answer, but it conflicts with other records. Only when you evaluate everything can you really see what the answer is.

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Did you know that the tower mill in Zeddam is the oldest existing windmill in the Netherlands? The windmill is most likely built before the year 1441 and to this day still in use for grinding wheat.

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If only people came with pull-down menus and on-line help . . .

# **TAKING BETTER NOTES IN YOUR GENEALOGY RESEARCH**

*By Amy Johnson Crow*



Much has been said about organizing our genealogy research, but there's an aspect that is often overlooked: note-taking. How do we work with the records and information as we're using them, analysing them, putting things together? Let's explore how to we can take better notes in our genealogy research.

The choices now are much broader than back in the days of deciding between spiral-bound notebooks and

loose-leaf notebook paper. But it's still a struggle for many of us.

There is more to the genealogy research process than gathering records and filling the blanks. Because research isn't a straight line, things start to get messy because we have different needs as we go through the process.

## **WHY WE NEED A GOOD NOTE-TAKING SYSTEM**

A bigger part of the note-taking problem is that we try to force everything into one system. We try to combine note-taking, analysis, to-do lists, and conclusions into one tool. We need to analyse what we already have. We need to discover new records. We need to evaluate those new records. And it's likely that we'll need to repeat as necessary.

## **ALL OF THAT IS A LOT TO ASK JUST ONE TOOL.**

Genealogy software or an online family tree is a great way to organize your conclusions or your working theories, but it's a fairly lousy way of keeping track of your research as you're drawing your conclusions. That software is best for organizing the people you're researching and keeping track of their relationships to each other. But that family tree software isn't going to help you analyse the records you've found. It isn't going to help you keep track of what you need or want to look for next.

What do we do with the records we find, whether on paper or digital, that we collect as we're researching? How do we keep track of it all?

Unfortunately, there is no one single solution that will work for everyone. It's like organizing. The system that works well for me might not work as well for you. I know I've shocked a fair number of my colleagues when I've told them that some of my research is organized by location rather than by surname.

When we think about research as a process, we realize that not everything is going to fit neatly into our family tree software or chart. One tool likely isn't going to cover all of our needs. What we need is a system where the tools can work together.

## **WHAT MAKES A GOOD GENEALOGY NOTE-TAKING SYSTEM**

It needs to be simple. The more complicated you make it, the less likely you are to keep it up. It will also be more difficult for all of the parts to work together.

It needs to be flexible. The whole point of taking notes and saving records is so that you can analyse them as you need to and how you need to.

What you want to avoid is using a tool — whether it's a piece of software or a piece of equipment — just for the sake of using it. If it helps your research process, awesome! Keep using it. If it doesn't help — if all it's doing is making more work for you — then stop using it. The key is to keep things simple. For example, for a long time, I tried to use Evernote in my research. But it always felt like a struggle. I could never quite get it to feel like a natural part of the process. Finally, I decided to stop using it. Your note-taking system will likely evolve, much like your organizational system does. Back in the old days, before I took a laptop or a smartphone everywhere, I kept a separate research log. They were pre-printed forms with columns for where I was researching, the date, the resource I used, what I was

looking for, and a summary of what I found (or didn't find). It was kind of like a table of contents into my full research notes.

But as I started to use my computer everywhere, I stopped keeping a research log that was separate from my research notes. Instead, I started using a document that combined the two. I still use that basic format today, even though now I more often use Google Docs than a Word document. In this document, I record where I'm researching (which is especially helpful later if I need to revisit a book or record group that I used in person) and I record what it is that I'm using (essentially writing a source citation).

Here's something that I have always found useful: I record what it was I was looking for. If I'm searching in a county history of Marion County, West Virginia, I'll record that I was looking for references to any Hibbs or Masons. Later, when I'm reviewing my notes, I can see that I didn't look for anyone with the surname of Amos.

I'll record what I found. If it's something short, I'll just type it into my notes. If it's longer or it's something online that I can download, I'll make a note that I made photocopies or downloaded images.

Just as important, I record what I *didn't* find. (Yes, I looked in this county history for anyone with the surname of Hibbs, but I didn't find any.)

It's also important to note any limitations to the source. Going back to the county history example, I'll note that it doesn't have an every-name index and that the Masons I found were the ones listed in the biographical section. When I review my notes later, I can see that there might be more Masons in books; they just weren't in the main list of biographies. Maybe I could follow up to find a digitized version of the book where I could do a full-text search to find more.

Logan County Genealogical Society. *Logan County, West Virginia Births 1872-1900*.

Logan, WV: by the society, n.d.

[Looking for children of Joseph and Elizabeth Baisden.]

Baisden, John R. date 8-4-1873 [from other records, looks to be Aug 4]. Parents Joseph Baisden and Elizabeth Lafferty. Reporter: Joseph Baisden, father.

[Note: this is the only child recorded born to Joseph and Elizabeth/Eliza]

Brown, Donna L. *Logan Co. WV Marriages, Book #1 1872-1892*. Bruno, WV: by the author, n.d.

[Looking for marriage of Joseph Baisden and Elizabeth.]

Found no Joseph Baisden marrying an Elizabeth/Eliza

*Sample of my genealogy notes. It's a combination of research notes and research log.*

### NOTE-TAKING A STEP FURTHER: THE TO-DO LIST

Speaking of follow-up, It's the second type of note-taking that I do: the to-do list or the idea list. I don't try to force my ideas for follow-up in my notes document. To me, it's too easily jumbled and lost. Instead, I keep a separate document. How I maintain that document depends upon the project and how I'm researching and analyzing at that moment.

I do have a running to-do list for my various projects. But when I'm in the moment, analyzing things and collecting new information, I almost always have a notepad with me. I'm constantly jotting down ideas for things to look for next and why I think something might be important.

Yes, I know I could do that on my computer, either in a Word document or a Google Doc (or any other piece of software). But I like the immediacy and the flexibility of writing it down. I also like how I'm more likely to retain the information if I write it versus if I type it.

If you're wondering, yes, those scribbles get added to my files in some form or another. I'll either add the task to my to-do list and/or I'll take that piece of paper and add it to that research folder.



## **AVOIDING RABBIT HOLES BY NOTE-TAKING**

I've recently taken note-taking and follow-up a step further. You know those rabbit holes we find ourselves in? Those ones that we get lured into with a bright, shiny object? ("Oh that database looks so cool, I have to look at it right now!") Which leads to another database, which leads to another website, which leads to a digitized book... I think part of the reason we follow those so easily is because we're afraid we'll never get back to them again.

What I've started doing is keeping a Google Doc with those "cool things." That way, I don't feel the need to stop everything and go explore it right now; I have a way of getting back to it later when I do have the time.

As you're developing your own system for taking notes, I encourage you to keep it simple and also not to try to force all of the functionality that you need into just one tool. Find the best tools for the various jobs that you need and come up with a system that works best for you.

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## **ANCIENT EGYPTIAN DENTISTRY**

Most people know that the ancient Egyptians were pretty incredible (they built great pyramids, after all!) — but what many don't realize is that they weren't only outstanding engineers, they were also masters of dentistry. While dental patients didn't receive the luxury and comfort many dentists offer today, the civilization was remarkable at treating dental health problems with very little technology or modern medical knowledge.

## **ANCIENT EGYPT AND DENTAL HEALTH CARE ACHIEVEMENTS**

Ancient Egyptians had a pretty good grasp of health care and the human body in general. Egyptians were masters at mummification, and they understood how to extract organs, drain blood, and preserve bodies. In addition to understanding human anatomy, they also understood how to practice oral care.

From both physical evidence discovered and written evidence in Egyptian health care manuals, Egyptians learned around 3000 B.C. that they could cure dental problems by pulling teeth and drilling out cavities. There were also a range of dental treatments eventually used in ancient Egypt, including packing teeth with a "composite" made of barley, honey and an antiseptic, and using a "mouthwash" of various syrups to relieve inflammation and pain. Evidence also shows that the

Egyptians were able to complete more extensive, physical dental work. Archaeologists have discovered several examples of teeth that had dental bridges or "prosthetic appliances."



## **ANCIENT EGYPTIAN DENTAL CARE VS. OTHER CIVILIZATIONS**

Today, dental health care is provided nearly worldwide. However, thousands of years ago, only a couple of civilizations offered dental treatments to sufferers. One of these was the Etruscans. The Etruscans focused less on treating ailments of the mouth and, instead, looked at dentistry as artistry.

Etruscans filled teeth with gold and wrapped gold bands around teeth for decoration. Like the Egyptians, they mastered the use of prosthetics in the mouth. The ancient Greeks also provided dental care to people suffering dental woes. Greek dentists would soak linen in medicinal solutions then apply that linen to holes in teeth. This helped relieve pain. However, the ancient Greeks found enduring pain to be a source of pride, so they focused less on treating dental issues and more on learning how to tolerate them.

## ANCIENT EGYPTIAN DENTAL CARE VS. THE DENTAL CARE OF TODAY

While the ancient Egyptians were certainly advanced in their ability to treat people who had dental problems, their dental care is nothing like the dentistry that is practiced today. Historians believe that the process was rather rudimentary — using rudimentary tools and very little analgesic to dull or stop pain. One important difference between Egyptian dental care and the dental care of today is that the Egyptians only performed dental care on people who were suffering from a problem. In contrast, dentists today provide regular dental care for preventative measures and in order to boost general health and appearance — not just to alleviate pain once it's already begun. Thanks to modern technology and scientific advancements, humans can go to the dentist today and sit in a comfortable chair while they experience a dental treatment that is relatively pain-free.

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### HOW TO DETACH A PHOTOGRAPH THAT HAS BEEN GLUED

Michael Zhang

If you ever need to remove a photograph that has been glued to paper or cardboard, you can try using the same trick that stamp collectors use: soaking in water. Amateur photographer Michael T. Lauer writes on Quora,

Photos are processed in water so they can stay in water for a fairly long time. A lot of glue is not waterproof so it will lose strength in water.

So, I'd approach this by soaking a print with paper backing in a tray with water (at room temperature) for 20-30 minutes. Take the print out of the water and lay it on a piece of rigid glass or plastic face down. Try to work the paper off the print by lifting at the edges. This part is trial and error.

After completing the work on the back, clean (squeegee) the glass/plastic and dip the print briefly in the water bath. Place the print on the glass face-up and squeegee the surface so that it's free of water drops (this will prevent spotting). Place the print on a drying screen (a screen like what is used in a window but not metal) face down and leave it where air can circulate around it to dry overnight. Lauer warns against using heat or physical removal of the glue and paper, as both techniques could cause damage to the print.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCygGwHrI2o&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1qnJkaIwYE2kDQ\\_Rt2p841yKiW1r1dO0H4d\\_8vc0ojHTiAcN71aNb3LcM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCygGwHrI2o&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1qnJkaIwYE2kDQ_Rt2p841yKiW1r1dO0H4d_8vc0ojHTiAcN71aNb3LcM)





## PIGEONS IN WWI AND WWII

Pigeons played an exceptional role in WWI and WWII. Pigeons were able to fly over enemy lines to send messages to allies all over the continent without the risk of having planes shot down or vehicles destroyed trying to relay that same message. Although many pigeons were killed in the process of transferring these messages, their success was great enough to merit the establishment of the Pigeon Corps in 1915. This group started with 15 mobile pigeon stations, or pigeon wagons, each with 4 birds and a handler and grew in size to over 400 men and 22,000 pigeons by the end of the war.



*Image of a pigeon wagon that was used in WWI*



*Message canister attached to a WWI pigeons leg*

Pigeons had a small canister attached to their legs that allowed for a message to be inserted and transported back to command posts. This system proved to be the most effective means of transporting important messages as pigeons are incredibly fast fliers and the telegraph system that existed during the war was still not very efficient. Many of these pigeons carried messages that saved the lives of many soldiers, and as a result, were awarded medals for heroism and service to their respective countries. One pigeon named 'Red Cock' carried a message that contained the coordinates of a sinking boat that had been torpedoed back to its loft at the command post which allowed a rescue team to be dispatched in time to save the crew. For his services, 'Red Cock' was awarded the Dickin Medal for his bravery. This medal is the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross which is awarded to individuals "for most conspicuous bravery, or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy."

As a result, the Dickin Medal is the highest honor that an animal can be awarded for military service, and of the 55 Dickin Medals awarded to animals, 32 of them were awarded to pigeons. Another pigeon named 'Cher Ami' had an even more fascinating story. In 1918, 500 allied soldiers were trapped with no food or ammunition in France and were being bombarded by friendly fire. Many men were being killed and there seemed to be no hope of surviving the attack. As a last ditch effort a message was attached to a pigeon which was released and immediately shot down by the enemy.

A second pigeon was released with a message and a suffered a similar fate. The final pigeon, 'Cher Ami' was then called for. As with the first two birds, a message was attached to its leg and it was released into the sky. 'Cher Ami' was instantly shot through the breast and fell to the ground; however, unlike his predecessors, 'Cher Ami' got back up and continued to fly another 25 miles, amidst a sky of bullets and the chaos of war, all the way back to headquarters. He delivered the message and was able to save the 194 remaining soldiers from certain death; however, his wounds consisted of a shot through the breast, a blinded eye and a nearly unattached leg. Miraculously, medics were able to save the bird and replaced his wounded leg with a wooden one. For his services, 'Cher Ami' was awarded the Croix de Guerre Medal, inducted into the racing pigeon hall of fame, and became the mascot of the Department of Service.

Pigeons continued to be of great service during the Second World War. All fighter pilots carried two pigeons with them during missions so that if their planes were shot down they could send word of

their coordinates to be rescued. Multiple pigeons were awarded medals for doing just this throughout the World War II .



*A pigeon with a special harness that allows it to hold a camera on its underside while flying*

Pigeons, despite their proficiency at message delivery, were also used to take aerial photos of enemy encampments by means of an ingenious harness that allowed for a camera to be mounted on the underside of the birds without hampering their ability to fly. The birds were flown over suspected enemy positions and upon their return, the film was developed resulting in valuable information on the enemy. The impact of the pigeon on the war effort during both World Wars cannot be overstated. Hundreds of thousands of pigeons gave their lives for their countries, and in doing so saved the lives of countless soldiers and turned the tide of the war.

*For more information*

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War\\_pigeon#:~:text=During%20World%20War%20I%20and,know%20a%20message%20had%20arrived.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_pigeon#:~:text=During%20World%20War%20I%20and,know%20a%20message%20had%20arrived.)

Ada Cable has submitted the following

She writes; “I've had it in family papers for a long time, my aunt gave it to me in Holland years ago. I should've asked her if they actually had a pigeon land at the farm on the outskirts of Breda and who could read French!  
My friend translated it while I typed it out.”

Additionally, special crates containing pigeons, enough food for 10 days, and directions for use were dropped in enemy occupied territories throughout Europe in hopes that allies would find them and send word of enemy positions and movements. Although many of the birds did not return, those that did brought with them information that unquestionably helped in the war effort and eventual victory.

**VIVE LA PATRIE    Long live the fatherland**

**A BAS LES BOCHES    Down with the Cabbageheads**

**YOU have had good luck in finding this pigeon; use of it to serve the fatherland.**

**Here is a unique opportunity which won't come a second time; so use it the best way you can.**

**Help us to chase the enemy from our homes and liberate yourself and get well**

**Send us information about the Germans what they are doing and thinking.**

**Read carefully our questionnaire and faithfully follow our instructions.**

**We will know how to repay you when victory is gained. We will not forget your efforts.**

**YOU can gather important information. THIS pigeon can transmit it to us. WE will know how to use it.**

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1. As soon as you get home give the pigeon water and food. Let him have space to move around after his flight. Look after him well, if necessary, for several days for he has an important role to fulfill.**
- 2. Having studied the questionnaire gather your information and write it carefully and legibly. DESTROY the material including the pencil. Put the message in the inside tube which you will then put in the outer tube. As you fix the tube to the pigeon's leg make sure that the interior tube is at the top.**
- 3. Don't sign the message with your real name, use a fictitious name or a symbol. Keep it safe because that will help us find you after to repay you for your act of faith.**

4. Having decided the moment for its departure, attach the tube carefully to the pigeon's foot. If possible, set the pigeon free at dawn in good weather. If that is impossible place it on a roof or a window ledge or a wall or a tree just before dawn. If you can help it don't set the pigeon free in the afternoon in the evening or early night and don't set it free if it is rainy or foggy.
5. Give the pigeon a good spoonful of wheat the evening before or the evening when you set it free and give it something to drink. Give it another drink a half hour before letting it go but do not feed it at that time.
6. **VERY IMPORTANT** don't forget to mention the date and your locality in your message.

**REMAIN SILENT !**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

Carefully read the following questions and try to provide as much information as possible.

#### **ENEMY DEFENSES**

Describe as fully as possible the defense system in your region, for example explain where the command posts are, the machine gun cluster, placement for heavy guns, barbed wire, DCA? , add also the weight of the main bridges and preparation for destruction of the bridges and a detailed description of all military work in your area would be useful.

- a. Describe forbidden zones and the details of all the new regulations about the enemy's preparation for the invasion of Europe by the united nations.

#### **ENEMY TROOPS**

- b. What troops are near your house. What are their insignias and their numbers. Do they have distinctive colours on their shoulders. If you know the names of their officers and their ranks give them to us.
- c. Inform us of any military convoys, indicate the direction, the load and the composition of trains. Are there recent departures or arrivals. If there are, if possible, tell us where the troops came from and where they going. Also, if possible, draw all the inscriptions and signs on trucks and cars that you can note.
- d. What war materials are in your region, where are the petrol stations and munition dumps.
- e. Where do the Germans live. Send us the address, for example the General and his staff and the German commander of police (e.g. Geheime Feldpolizei, Feldgendarmarie or Gestapo).
- f. What is the morale of these men like.

#### **OTHER INFORMATION**

- g. Explain the exact position of aerodromes or landing sites and tell us the number and type of aircraft that are there. Their markings and signs are particularly important to us. Also mention the size and management of the aerodromes. Mention every installation with rectangular metal grille/gates? Or any other moveable arrangement. That is to say swiveling, anything that is metallic and resembles a large building or a speaker tower.
- h. Send the names of warships in the ports, don't forget the submarines. If you live near a naval base add the names of the superior officers, the details of their materials, watch towers.
- i. Tell us the result of recent bombing raids and add the date, tell us as exactly where possible the naval and military targets that were bombed

*NB - If we have forgotten something important you can add it yourself.*

### **RADIO**

In pinpointing the area where you live, give us information on the following points:

1. At what time and of what frequencies do you listen to the BBC can you always hear it clearly.
2. What recent transmissions from the BBC did you particularly like or dislike and why.



3. What other stations do you listen to in the area, at what time and why.  
Tell us the broadcasts you like best.
4. Has the enemy tried to confiscate the radios in the area. How?  
Are there many in working order left. Are there any battery operated ones.
5. If there are any interference stations /blocking? in the area, tell us where.
6. Are these radio messages known by everyone exactly and quickly?
7. Are you missing some allied transmissions you need to hear.

**DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN TO HELP OUR COMMON EFFORT.  
THANK YOU. COURAGE, WE WON'T FORGET YOU.**

#### TRANSLATIONS

Boches a shortened form of the French slang portmanteau alboche, itself derived from Allemand ("German") and caboche ("head" or "cabbage"). The alternative spellings "Bosch" or "Bosche" are sometimes found.

Boches - cabbage head/ dumfkop/ dumb-head. Krauts probably from sauerkraut, which is cabbage.

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#### QUICK TIP – UNUSUAL NAME OR TRANSCRIPTION ERROR?

*By Yvette Hoitink*

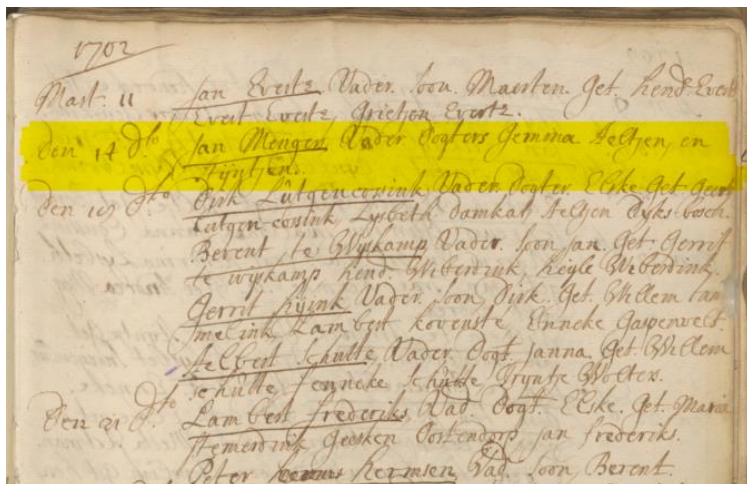
In my tree, I had one set of triplets: Gemma, Aeltjen, and Stijntjen, daughter of Jan Mengers. They were baptized in the Dutch Reformed Church of Winterswijk on 14 March 1702. I first learned about them in the transcribed records that I bought as a teenager and was excited about the special find. I descend from Aeltjen.

I haven't been researching this line for a while, but the other day there was a social media post about twins, triplets, and other multiple births, and I shared my triplet ancestor.

But then I started thinking. "Gemma" for a girl? Really? That's a name I have never encountered in the Netherlands in the 1700s before, and definitely not in Winterswijk where everybody seems to

choose from the same set of about twenty names. To have triplets *and* a unique name seems to defy the odds. Could there be a transcription error?

Thankfully, the scans are online now so I could verify the information in the original records. And what do you know? It says "dogters geminae" [twin daughters], not "Gemma."<sup>1</sup> Mystery solved. And not a triplet in my tree after all.



*Baptismal record of Aeltjen and Stijntjen Mengers, twins*

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#### HERE IS AN OLD EPITAPH BROMIDE:

On an old tombstone was the following quote, "Pause stranger, when you pass me by, As you are now so once was I. As I am now, so you will be. So prepare for death and follow me."

Below that epitaph someone scratched the following, "To follow you I'm not content, Until I know which way you went."

## DID YOU KNOW



The town of Nördlingen, Germany, was built inside an old crater from a meteor that once crashed into the countryside. Residents have incorporated parts of the meteor into their town, including the church - which is encrusted with meteorites and microscopic diamonds.



## 10 OF THE OLDEST DUTCH THINGS

Being built on a swamp, where wood was the building material of the day, not much remains of the prehistoric Netherlands. Even the Romans avoided much of the country because of the risk of wet feet.

But here is a list of 10 old Dutch things.

- 1 **Oldest signs of life** - The oldest signs of human life in the swampy lowlands were left by a humanoid called *Homo heidelbergensis* who decided the perfect place to roam was what is now the middle bit of the Netherlands. There they left flints and tools that may be 300,000 years old but could possibly be double that number. The tools, sharpened stones, were probably used to scrape hides.
- 2 **Oldest burial** - The oldest burial place found so far is in Hardinxveld-Giessendam, where the complete skeleton of a woman was discovered. Trijntje, so dubbed because she was found during building work on the Betuwe train (trein) line, is thought to be between 7,000 and 7,500 years old. She was 158 cm tall, and between 40 and 60 at the time of her death. How she died could not be ascertained.
- 3 **Oldest road** - The oldest roads which can be identified were part of the Roman Limes, the border defences which marked the edges of the Roman empire which roughly ran from Katwijk and then followed the Rhine. The roads were not thought to have been paved, but packed with gravel and clay.
- 4 **Oldest town** - The oldest town in the Netherlands as far as official town privileges are concerned is Stavoren (1058) in Friesland but Nijmegen is probably the oldest town of some importance today. In 1980 a roman victory column dating from 17 AD was stumbled upon, celebrating the emperor Tiberius' successful campaigns in the Lower Rhine. Nijmegen was known as *Ulpia Noviomagus Batavorum* in Roman times.
- 5 **Oldest house** - The oldest Dutch house still standing is in Deventer. It has a bit of wall dating from 900. The rest of the house was built in 1130, including its city gate (which is the oldest city gate in the Netherlands.)
- 6 **Oldest written Dutch** - *Hebban olla vogala nestas hagunnan hinase hic anda thu, wat unbidan nu?* It means, or was thought to mean 'All the birds are making their nest except you and I, what are we waiting for?' and it has long been considered the oldest example of the Dutch language. The text was found on a manuscript copied in Winchester Abbey and is thought to

be a little doodle to try out a new pen by a monk in his native West Flemish. In 2012 Belgian professor Luc de Grauwe made a very convincing case for the sentence to be in Old English. According to the professor this translates into the much less romantic and frankly incomprehensible: ‘All the birds have now built their nests except you and I, now what do you expect?’ The official oldest Dutch bit is Maltho thi afrio lito, or ‘I tell you I release you’ which dates from 510 and was the standard phrase to free a serf.

- 7 Oldest reclaimed land - Reclaiming land has been a Dutch pursuit since the 14th century but the first polder of any significance is the Beemster (1607 – 1612). It even made the World Heritage list. Brilliant engineer Jan Adriaanszoon Leeghwater (literally empty (of) water) used 47 windmills to drain an area of almost 73 m2 km. The Beemster was turned into extremely fertile agricultural land and generated much wealth for the canny investors of the time.
- 8 Oldest church - The oldest church in the Netherlands still functioning as a church is the Oude Kerk in Oosterbeek (Gelderland) which is pre-Romanesque and dates from the 10th century. In 1944 the church was the backdrop to heavy fighting between the Germans and the Allies during Operation Market Garden. It remains a place of pilgrimage for many veterans today.
- 9 Oldest university - Leiden University is the oldest university in the Netherlands. It was founded on February 7, 1575. Apparently, William of Orange offered the city a choice: an exemption of tax for ten years or a university. It would have been interesting to know how close the vote actually was. Apart from such 19th century Dutch luminaries as statesman Johan Thorbecke, father of the Dutch constitution, an impressive 13 Nobel prize winners worked at the university. Albert Einstein, Marie Curie and Niels Bohr also visited.
- 10 Oldest company - The oldest Dutch company still in business is Hotel De Draak in Bergen op Zoom. It was listed as an inn as early as 1406 and is a hotel still. It has had its share of mishaps, most recently a devastating fire in 2013, but it has since reopened. One of the most remarkable people to (dis)grace the guest list must be the Spanish Duke of Alba who stayed the night in 1567, a year before the start of the 80 Years War’, or the Dutch revolt against Spain. This list was first published on website

*Source ; DutchNews.nl:*

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## **WHAT DUTCH DNA LOOKS LIKE – 2020 EDITION**

*By Yvette Hoitink  
(edited)*

Ethnicity estimates can vary between companies. They have different algorithms, different reference populations, and define different regions. To show you what Dutch DNA could look like with the various companies, here are my own results.

Based on my tree, I should be >99% Dutch, with a bit of German and French. I have some medieval lines from other countries in the 1200s and before, but the chances of me having inherited any of their DNA is minimal. My father’s side is from Gelderland, near the German border, and my mother’s from Noord-Brabant and Zeeland, near the Belgian border. So how did the companies do? Companies fine-tune their predictions over time. This is the third article I’ve written about this. I left the previous ones online, so you can compare the current estimates to the ones in 2016 and 2018.

## **ANCESTRY**

Ancestry thinks I’m 53% England, Wales & Northwestern Europe, 45% Germanic Europe, and 2% Swedish. The overview map shows the first category located in England and Wales, but if I click on that category, it shows a lighter area that includes the southern part of the Netherlands where my mother’s family is from. So although I find it weird for that part of the Netherlands to be lumped in with England and Wales, I can’t say it’s incorrect.

The Germanic European, which Ancestry thinks belongs to the genetic community Netherlands, is spot on. I don’t know where the 2% Swedish DNA came from, but that might be noise. Interestingly, my mom has the same roughly 50/50 split between English/Wales/NW Europe and Germanic Europe,



so it's not like all of her DNA was responsible for one predicted ethnicity and my father's ancestors on the German border were responsible for the other.

There is a big difference since 2018, when Ancestry had me as 94% Western European, and low confidence regions Great Britain (2%), Iberian Peninsula (2%), Ireland/Scotland/Wales (1%) and Scandinavia (<1%). The Iberian disappeared completely, but was marginal to begin with.

### **23ANDME**

23andMe predicts me to be 58.1% French & German, 22.9% British & Irish, 4.2% Scandinavian, 14.3% Broadly Northwestern European, 0.1% Broadly European, and detected trace ancestry of 0.3% Anatolian, 0.1% Broadly Central Asian, Northern Indian & Pakistani.

The French & German has gone up since 2018, which is good since according to my research that should be 100%.

If I click through to the regions for French & German, it identified Gelderland and Noord-Brabant as the top two positions. That is consistent with my tree. Color me impressed! I hardly have any known ancestors from North and South Holland, so I do not understand why they appear so high.

Zeeland, no. 5 according to 23andMe, is in third place in my tree.

It also predicts I have ancestors from Flanders (more likely) and Walloon (less likely) in Belgium in the past 200 years, which does not fit my tree. But since my grandparents were born a couple of miles from the Belgian border, I think the Flemish prediction is not that far off.

For Germany, it predicts my ancestors likely came from North Rhine-Westphalia. I do indeed have an ancestor, Arend Kastein, who was born in Westphalia in 1817, just over 200 years ago. Several of his ancestors were from Westphalia too, as well as some other ancestors of mine further back. I don't know of any ancestors from other parts of Germany, but these are less likely according to 23and Me. All in all, 23andMe's regional predictions are pretty impressive, in my opinion. It's too bad about the large amounts of unexplained British.

### **FAMILYTREEDNA**

FamilyTreeDNA estimates me to be 89% British Isles, 4% Southeast Europe, 2% Asia Minor, with trace results <2% Central Asia, <1% South America, and <2% West Middle East. The results for the are the same as in 2018.

Like in the previous years, FamilyTreeDNA completely missed my West and Central European DNA, which it does detect in my mother (61%) and paternal uncle (59%). They both also have significant amounts of Scandinavian (15% and 29%, respectively), where I have none. This clearly shows a problem with their algorithm.

My tree is >99% Dutch, which should be in the West and Central European ethnicity, so it is hard to understand why they fail to pick up any when they do find it as the largest ethnicity for my mother and paternal uncle.

### **MYHERITAGE**

MyHeritage predicts me to be 64.2% North and West European, 32.8% Irish, Scottish, and Welsh, 1.8% Askenazi Jewish, and 1.2% Middle Eastern. The results have not changed since 2018. I don't know of any Irish, Welsh, Jewish, and Middle Eastern ancestors. I have one Scottish mercenary soldier in my tree who arrived in the Netherlands in the early 1600s, but he alone cannot account for being estimated to be almost 1/3 Irish, Scottish, or Welsh. I'd love to be, but I'm just not.

### **LIVINGDNA**

Living DNA estimates me to be 41.5% Great Britain and Ireland, 36.6% Northwest Germanic, 12.4% Scandinavia, 6.7% South Germanic, and 2.8% Basque. The Great Britain is further split up into predictions for East Anglia (16.5%), Central England (10.6%), South Central England (6.5%), Cornwall (3.5%), Southeast England (3.4%), and South Yorkshire (1.1%).

In terms of their categories, I should be >99% Northwest Germanic, so they're pretty far from the mark. The 41.5% Great Britain and Ireland is way too high, and the subdivision into regions within

England makes no sense. However, only 41.5% British is a huge improvement over the 2018 estimates, which had me at 94.4% British/Irish.

We can see from this that all companies except FamilyTreeDNA and MyHeritage updated their estimates since 2018. This shows that it pays to go back to your results, since they change over time.

In general, I am more pleased with my results now than I was in 2018. I do feel like Ancestry is cheating a bit by lumping North-Western Europe in with England and Wales, which the other companies consider to be separate ethnicities. I think it's impressive that Ancestry predicted I belong to the "Netherlands" genetic community, and that 23andMe not only picked the Netherlands as the most likely country of origin for my ancestors, but even pegged Gelderland and Noord-Brabant as my top provinces.

What these results show more than anything is that we should not treat them as gospel. Even people whose ancestors pretty much all come from the same country don't get uniform results. We shouldn't freak out if the ethnicity predictions don't match our trees.

At the continent level, the predictions were solid. The companies all pegged me as 100% or near 100% European, which matches my tree. Below that, they all placed me in the North-Western part of

Europe, though some thought I was more British than I am. At the lower levels, they become increasingly unreliable, which is easy to understand if we look at the migration history of Europe.

If I have to pick a favorite, it would have to be 23andMe, because they got the highest prediction of North-Western European or Germanic DNA (not counting Ancestry's combined category) and got my top two provinces right. But Ancestry and MyHeritage also did well. LivingDNA suggesting areas in England that have no relation to my tree makes them less believable in my opinion, though they have improved since 2018. I think FamilyTreeDNA knocked themselves out of the competition by not detecting any of my West and Central European DNA. I look forward to seeing how these results improve over time.

*For full article and charts:*

[https://www.dutchgenealogy.nl/what-dutch-dna-looks-like-2020-edition/?fbclid=IwAR18KxfiNj94bAb0gfk\\_aWWgygsxUcmUSGPleB1bHfONuca...](https://www.dutchgenealogy.nl/what-dutch-dna-looks-like-2020-edition/?fbclid=IwAR18KxfiNj94bAb0gfk_aWWgygsxUcmUSGPleB1bHfONuca...) 1/14



## GERMAN SURNAMES: WHERE THEY COME FROM AND WHAT THEY MEAN

If you've been researching your German ancestors — and what Dutch person doesn't have German Ancestors — you've probably been spending a lot of time with their surnames. Perhaps you've been wondering what those surnames mean and where they come from.

German family names can be a fascinating gateway to the past — not only your family's past, but also the history of Germany and the German language. In this post, we will explore the origins of German family names, how they developed, and how to research the surnames in your own family.

### WHERE GERMAN SURNAMES BEGAN

In the distant past, individuals were only given a first name. Most people lived in small villages with small populations, so if you called for someone named Heinrich, chances were the right Heinrich would turn around. However, as populations increased, the multitude of people who shared the same first name became confusing.

Around the 12th century, people began to differentiate between individuals who shared the same name using the Latin word *dictus* ("called"), or later, with the

German *genant* (“called”), *giheizen/heisset* (“is called”), *den man spricht* (“of whom you speak”), *den man nennt* (“the one who you call”), and so on.

It looked like this: *Cunradus dictus Faber*, *Heinricus dictus Kreier*, *bruder Egebreht dem man spricht der Wolhuser* (“brother Egebreht who is called the Wolhuser”), *Hans Rot genannt Rotlieb*, *Heinrich bi dem Bach*. These additions eventually evolved into the surnames we know today: *Heinrich dictus Schneider* became Heinrich Schneider.

These surnames were not always family names, in the sense that they were not necessarily passed down in the family. A son and a father might have different surnames. It was only in the 19th century that surnames became hereditary.

## WHERE DID THE GERMAN SURNAMES COME FROM?

German surnames generally fit into one of the following categories:

### 1. German Surnames derived from first names

These were originally names with two parts, such as:

- Berthold
- Burkhard
- Degenhardt
- Leonhart
- Siegmund
- Volkmar
- Wolfram

Some of them were later shortened to names such as:

- Sigg
- Volker
- Wolf
- Günter
- Bernd
- Gerd
- Kurt

What’s interesting about these names is that they contain old German words that are no longer in use. For example, *ask* (“spear”), *beraht* (“bright, radiant”), *degan* (“warrior”), *fruma* (“benefit, advantage, blessing”), *hagen* (“fenced place”), *wig* (“fight, struggle”), or *witu* (“wood”).

Names with Christian origins were quite popular:

- Johannes
- Nikolaus
- Petrus
- Matthias
- Jacobus

Names like these might have been shortened to *Alex*, *Christoph*, *Nickel*, or *Franz*.

### 2. German surnames derived from family origin

Some names signified tribal affiliation, such as:

- Baier
- Franke
- Friese
- Holländer
- Preuß (Preuss)
- Sachse

Others were based on place names: Hans from Nürnberg might be called Hans Nürnberger. Other examples include names such as:

- Bamberger



- Bielfeld
- Erfurt
- Fischbeck
- Oldenburg

Still others described the location where the person lived. For example:

- Althaus (“old house”)
- Birnbaum (“pear tree”)
- Brückner (someone who lives near a bridge)
- Buschmann (someone who lives near bushes)
- Holzer (someone who lives near a forest)
  - Lindemann (“linden tree man”)
- Weidemann (“willow man” or “pasture man”)
  - Kirchhof (“land around a church”)
  - Angermann (“meadow man”)

### 3. German surnames derived from professions

This category includes many, many German names. Among them are:

- Bauer (“farmer”)
- Pflüger (“plowman”)
- Schäfer (“shepherd”)
  - Jäger (“hunter”)
  - Becker (“baker”)
  - Koch (“cook”)
  - Müller (“miller”)
- Schmied/Schmidt (“smith”)
- Stellmacher (“carriage maker”)
  - Wagner (“wagon driver”)
- Gerber (“leather preparer”)
- Schuhmacher (“shoemaker”)
  - Weber (“weaver”)
  - Schneider (“tailor”)
- Zimmermann (“carpenter”)
- Kaufmann (“merchant”)
- Krüger (“innkeeper” or “merchant of glass and pottery”)
- Richter (legal official, from the word for “to make right”)
  - Meier (“mayor”)
- Hofmann (“steward” or “estate manager”)
- Lehmann (“tenant” or “vassal”)

### 4. German Family names derived from characteristics

These names originated from descriptions of the person’s appearance, character, habits, and so on.

For example:

- *Kraus* (“curly hair”)
- *Groß/Gross* (“large”)
  - *Klein* (“small”)
  - *Lang* (“long”)
- *Schimmelpfennig* (“miser”)
  - *Jung* (“young”)
  - *Ritter* (“knight”)

- *Bär* (“bear”)
- *Fink* (“fink”)
- *Fuchs* (“fox”)
- *Hase* (“rabbit”)
- *Storch* (“stork”)
- *Vogel* (“bird”)
- *Knobloch* (“garlic”)

There are an estimated 850,000 different surnames in Germany — a very high number!

### HOW TO RESEARCH A GERMAN SURNAME

When first approaching a German surname, it’s important to remember that each name originally had a meaning. For the most part, the name was chosen by people who knew the person and who used the name to describe him. For example, they might have called him *Schneider* because he was a tailor. The most common way to explore a German surname is to create a distribution map using “Telefon-CDs” — CDs that contain phone book information, including the last names of people in specific households. Most people use the CD collections from around 1990–2000, because from that point forward, people began using cell phones, and the listings don’t contain any information about their place of residence. Telefon-CDs from that time contain around 35 million names, accounting for almost 50% of the population of Germany — enough to get a reliable picture of name distribution. Pre-election polls are another source: they account for around 1,500 people, and the information often matches the mood of the population very precisely.

By plotting the distribution of a surname in Germany, you can determine whether the name originated in Germany or came into use due to immigration (mostly as a result of World War II). It’s not always easy for a German speaker to understand the meaning of a family name. This is because names are often based on words that come from Middle High German or Middle Low German, which are no longer spoken in Germany. Languages evolve over time, and words often become archaic and are no longer used. But these words might be retained in names — such as place names and names of rivers. To understand the meaning of a name derived from obsolete words, you need to have a background in the history of the German language — especially Low German, which for a time was the dominant language of the entire Baltic Sea region in northern Germany. Difficult names can only be interpreted by a linguist who is familiar with the historical layers of the language. This is not always easy for German names, particularly those among the Sorbian and Danish minorities.

### GERMAN NAMES FROM OTHER LANGUAGES

Another difficulty encountered in the interpretation of German names is the consequences of population shifts as a result of World War II. Approximately 16 million refugees and displaced persons moved to Germany after 1945, and many of their names are derived from other languages and dialects.

Because of this, many names in Germany are derived from all the languages of eastern and southeastern Europe, such as Polish, Yiddish, Czech, French, Baltic languages (Old Prussian, Lithuanian, and Latvian), Belarusian, Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, Hungarian, Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, Bulgarian, and so on. To understand the meaning of a name derived from these languages, you need to have a background in the Slavic, Baltic, Finno-Ugric, Romanic, Turkic, and other languages — not only the modern vernaculars, but the historical development of these languages and their dialects. As you can imagine, this is anything but easy.

There are a few institutions in Germany dedicated to researching the backgrounds of German names.

This research takes time and patience. Sound information is not always readily available.

However, name research is one area of linguistics that attracts a great deal of interest. People are interested to learn not only the origins of family names, but also first names, place names, and names of natural landmarks. The latter are particularly difficult to interpret because they are old — sometimes very old. Determining the meaning of these names involves special challenges.

Still, even if you can't determine the precise meaning of your German family names, it's never been easier to research your German roots thanks to the availability of online records. Knowing more about your family's origins may help you understand more about their names, and vice versa. Keep all this in mind when you delve into German historical records, and you just might learn something new about your ancestors.



*This is a loose translation of a piece written by Prof. Dr. Jürgen Udolph. Prof. Dr. Udolph is a name researcher, father of 4, and a tenured professor at Leipzig University, and he is the most sought-after expert today when it comes to the interpretation of names. He has researched more than 10,000 names in the past ten years.*

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### THE TANGLED TALE OF THE SEVEN SUTHERLAND SISTERS

**Growing glory, but a bitter end**  
*Denise Shelton*

At any given time, one can type the phrase "Sutherland Sisters" into the search engine on eBay and come up with multiple cabinet card photos, advertisements, and other artifacts related to their heyday. They were the 19th century American equivalent of rock stars, supermodels, and titans of merchandising all rolled into one, or should I say seven? Their story is as

strange as it is remarkable.

*"The Seven Sutherland Sisters" (via historydaily.org)*

### **MAGIC IN A BOTTLE**

The seven Sutherland sisters, Sarah, Victoria, Isabella, Grace, Naomi, Dora, and Mary began life in relative poverty on a small farm in Niagara County, NY. Born between 1845 and 1862, as they matured, it became apparent that each could produce a growth of long, luxurious hair. The girls' mother, Mary Brink Sutherland, encouraged the extraordinary length by nightly applying a foul-smelling concoction of her design to the hair and scalp of each. She claimed this formula was responsible for their phenomenal hair-growing success.

The girls' father, Fletcher Sutherland, was a colorful character who struggled to provide for his family. The income from the farm was sparse, and the property taxes always seemed to be in arrears. He had to find a way to increase their revenue, preferably one that did not involve manual labour. (He often left his family to do the farm work, while he socialized with his friends in town.)

The family was a musical one, each girl sang and played an instrument, so Fletcher hatched the plan to put them on stage, starting small in church basements, and at local gatherings.

### **THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH**

*The Seven Sutherland Sisters and their father, Fletcher, and mother Mary in a publicity photo for Barnum and Bailey. (via wikipedia.org)*



*father, Fletcher, and mother Mary in a publicity photo for Barnum and Bailey. (via wikipedia.org)*



Although the girls were musically competent, Fletcher began to realize that the real draw was their freakishly long hair (a collective 37 feet). He began to capitalize on that.

At the end of each performance, the sisters would turn their backs to the audience as one and display their remarkable hair. This dramatic manoeuvre was a huge success, and in a few short years, they hit the big time

When the sisters were aged 18 to 36, they signed with legendary showman P.T. Barnum.

From the early 1880s through the early 1900s, the Seven Sutherland Sisters toured with Barnum and Bailey's circus, becoming (along with Jumbo the elephant) one of the show's top acts.

They traveled in style by private railway car, and their clothes were the height of fashion with designers paying them to model their creations. Fans mobbed them wherever they went, some armed with scissors to get a snippet of the miraculous locks for themselves. But big money started rolling in around 1885 when Fletcher, prompted by Naomi's new husband J. Henry Bailey (who also served as the act's manager), started brewing, bottling, and selling the family's secret recipe.



*A bottle that once held the famous formula. (via hairraisingstories.com)*



*Package for 7 Sutherland Sisters Hair Fertilizer (Image via RapunzelsDelight.com)*

“The 7 Sutherland Sisters Hair Grower” was aggressively marketed in newspapers and magazines with outrageous claims and letters from satisfied “customers” that were all suspiciously similar in tone and style. The ads also featured endorsements by mysterious medical men who swore to the tonic's efficacy.

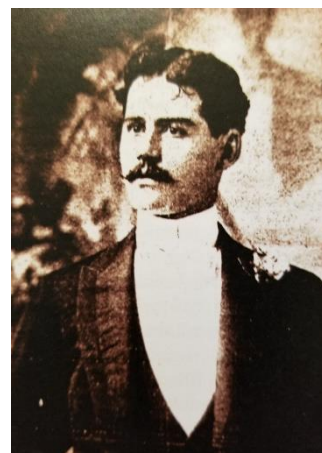
It was all nonsense. The Hair Grower, when tested by a legitimate chemist, turned out to be mostly witch hazel and bay rum with traces of hydrochloric acid, salt, and magnesium. But the beauty business is built on faith, hope, and a fair dollop of self-delusion, and the public continued to crave 7 Sutherland Sisters products.

The family added hair dyes called “Hair Coloraturas,” “Hair Fertilizer,” a scalp cleanser, brushes, and combs to the product line. The items were sold in retail stores as well as in their company stores called “parlours,” including one in New York City. Several of the sisters would visit the parlours and be available at set times for hair care consultations or to simply attract shoppers by standing in the windows.



By 1888, Fletcher and Mary had died, and the sisters had amassed a fortune. At the turn of the century, having made millions, they were among the wealthiest women in America. They lived together in an opulent mansion they built in Warner's Corners, NY, not far from where they were born. At this point, things started to get weird.

*Sister act -Newspaper ad for an appearance at the New Dime Museum (Image via Sideshow World)*



*Portrait of Isabella's husband Frederick Castlemaine, undated (public domain)*

## LOVE, LOSS, AND MORBID OBSESSION

In 1892 when Isabella was 40, she married 27-year-old Frederick Castlemaine. Frederick was handsome, charming, and hopelessly addicted to opium and morphine. The family adored him, and he became a central figure at the numerous parties, entertainments, and antics that the Sutherlands engaged in at the mansion.

The event that most seemed to unhinge the family was the death of sister Naomi in 1893. Her body lay in state in the family mansion for weeks, while her sisters planned an elaborate mausoleum.

Eventually, they decided to bury her with her parents in the family plot in nearby Lockport. The change in burial plans may have partly been because there was a need for secrecy. The sisters were no better with money than their father had been, and they needed to keep it coming in. Six Sutherland Sisters would not do, so they hired a replacement for Naomi, and the show went on.

Tragedy struck again in 1897 when Frederick Castlemaine was found dead in his hotel room while on tour. Whether or not his death was accidental is up for speculation, but Isabella was inconsolable. She refused to let his body be moved for hours, insisting that he was going to wake up. Eventually, others in attendance persuaded her to let them arrange for its transport back to Lockport.

Frederick, like Naomi, lay in state for weeks in a glass-domed coffin in the parlour of the Sutherland mansion, his body un-embalmed. The family gathered around him day and night, singing his favourite songs. Isabella insisted that his mausoleum be fitted with a window so he could get out when he awakened, as she was sure he would. Night after night, she kept vigil at his tomb, weeping and begging him to return to her. He never did.

### THE PARTY'S OVER

Isabella was the first to go broke. Grace, the last surviving sister, died in 1946. (via [collectorsweekly.com](http://collectorsweekly.com))

As the women aged, their touring and modelling opportunities dwindled. Isabella married again and split from the family to launch a competing product with her second husband, Alonzo Swain. The couple went broke.

When Victoria was 50 in 1899, she married a 19-year-old and became estranged from the rest of the family. She died three years later and was replaced in the act, as Naomi had been, with a surrogate. Mary, plagued by periods of insanity, was often locked in her room. Victoria, Grace, Dora, and Mary never married. Sarah died in 1919.

The final nail in the coffin of the family fortune was the age of the flapper. Women were bobbing their hair, and no longer wanted to be burdened by styles requiring hours of maintenance. The production of 7 Sutherland Sisters hair care products ended, and most of the fortune was gone. The remaining sisters' Grace, Dora, and Mary sold the now crumbling mansion for a pittance and moved into a tiny house in Lockport.

### LAST STOP HOLLYWOOD

One last hope brought the remaining three sisters to Hollywood in 1926, where there was talk of making a movie about their lives. Discussions with the film studio led nowhere, and before returning home, Dora was struck and killed by a car while crossing a street in Los Angeles.

Her sisters arranged for cremation of her remains, but lacking the funds to pay for the service, Grace and Mary returned home to Lockport without them. The belief is that they are still there. Mary died in 1939. When Grace, the last of the world-famous Seven Sutherland Sisters, died in 1946 at the age of 92, her final resting place was an unmarked grave.



DORA

MARY

NAOMI

ISABEL



VICTORIA



GRACE



SARAH

*"This is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper." — T.S. Eliot*

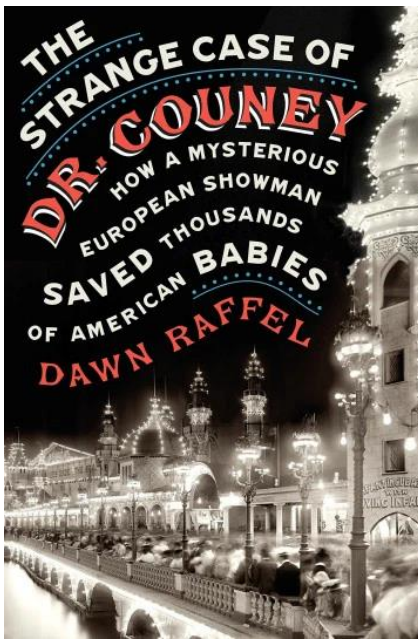
<https://medium.com/history-of-yesterday/the-tangled-tale-of-the-seven-sutherland-sisters-efc560089264>

<https://historydaily.org/the-sutherland-sisters>



# **FAKE DOCTOR SAVED THOUSANDS OF INFANTS AND CHANGED MEDICAL HISTORY**

*By Larry Getlen*



A new book, “The Strange Case of Dr. Couney: How a Mysterious European Showman Saved Thousands of American Babies,” by Dawn Raffel (Blue Rider Press), tells the story of Martin Couney, a self-appointed “doctor” — his credentials turned out to be non-existent — who nonetheless saved thousands of infants, and introduced incubators to the modern world.

When Marion Conlin gave birth to twins earlier than expected in a Brooklyn hospital in May 1920, one of her babies was already dead. Her doctor bluntly told the woman and her husband, Woolsey, “Don’t rush to bury that one, because you will need to bury the other one too. . . She’s not going to live the day.”

But Woolsey was not giving up on the other so easily. The couple had honeymooned the previous year in Atlantic City, and Woolsey recalled a sideshow exhibit featuring prematurely born babies whose lives were saved right there on the Boardwalk.

Resting in new machines called incubators, the babies made medical history while serving as a prime attraction for gawking tourists.

Woolsey also remembered hearing that the same doctor had set up a similar exhibit in Coney Island.

So while their own doctor tried to convince them that all was lost, Woolsey grabbed his 2-pound daughter, ran from the hospital and hailed a cab, hoping the Coney Island sideshow could save her life.

What little is known about Martin Couney is that he was born in Prussia in 1869 as Michael Cohn and changed his name after immigrating to New York at 18.

He does not appear to have had any medical credentials, and while he often claimed to be a protege of the world-renowned French doctor Pierre-Constant Budin, who popularized incubators in Europe, there is no evidence for this claim.

What is true is that whatever his motive, he spent 40 years as the only medical hope for parents of babies born too early in New York City and beyond. Raffel estimates he saved between 6,500 and 7,000 lives.

Incubators were invented in Europe in the late 19th century, the evolution of innovations from Russia, Germany and France. Couney claimed that in 1896, Budin, an actual pioneer in the field, sent him to display incubators at the Great Industrial Exhibition of Berlin. Rather than stand next to empty machines, Couney, referring to the displays as “child hatchery,” said he realized how much more effective it would be if they housed actual babies being saved for the public to see.

The truth about where Couney first encountered these machines, and his motivation for making them the great cause of his life, is unknown. Raffel believes he did not attend the 1896 exhibition at all, but heard about it, and became associated with the machines soon after.

“The exhibition in Berlin made a big splash,” Raffel says. “It was written up in newspapers all over the place, including the United States, and showmen started becoming interested in it.”



*Martin Couney shows off one of his rescued babies, Beth Allen*

However it began, Couney toured the machines around America and established a show in Coney Island in 1903, one block away from the Luna Park amusement park.

The exhibit ran in that general area for the next 40 years. Visitors were charged a quarter to view the babies, and the money went to their care.

As one might expect, people didn't know what to make of the exhibit at first.

*.Beth Allen today.*



A reporter for the Brooklyn Eagle newspaper, in a story headlined “Strangest Place on Earth for Human Tots to be Fed, Nursed and Cared For,” wrote that the idea of “haranguing the passing throng in an effort to divert its shekels for a spectacle so serious, not to say sacred, strikes one as questionable, almost repellent.” But by the end of the piece, the author’s impression had turned positive, praising the care the children received.

Couney hired barkers to stand outside the exhibit and attract customers, screaming slogans like, “Don’t forget to see the babies!” In 1922, one of his barkers was a young British actor named Archibald Leach, who later changed his name to Cary Grant.

Couney himself developed into quite the showman, hamming it up for the press and the crowds. “Every blistering, footsore day, he would station himself at the door to his show — ‘All the world loves a baby! Once seen, never forgotten!’ ” Raffel writes. “He never got tired of talking to the public, not even the Dummkopfs who deduced he’d made the little critters. (‘Hiya, Doc, where’dja get the eggs?’) Sometimes they wanted to order one fresh for themselves.” But for all his showbiz, Couney was in the lifesaving business, and he took it seriously. The exhibit was immaculate. When new children arrived, dropped off by panicked parents who knew Couney could help them where hospitals could not, they were immediately bathed, rubbed with alcohol and swaddled tight, then “placed in an incubator kept at 96 or so degrees, depending on the patient. Every two hours, those who could suckle were carried upstairs on a tiny elevator and fed by breast by wet nurses who lived in the building. The rest [were fed by] a funneled spoon.”

*A photograph of an incubator at Dr. Martin Couney’s Coney Island incubator sideshowAP*



Even the nurses — whose genuine medical degrees helped make up for the absence of Couney’s in instances such as signing death certificates — understood that maintaining the show business of it all was key to keeping the operation alive.

They would often feed or bathe the babies where people could watch, and one nurse would “flash a diamond ring and slip it over an infant’s wrist, all the way up its skinny arm, to demonstrate scale.”

While Couney couldn’t save every baby, Raffel writes that “most of the patients went home in a couple of months.” It’s unverified, since Couney never published anything or left any records of his work, but he claimed an 85 percent survival rate, once saying most deaths occurred within 24 to 48 hours of his receiving a baby.

“If we have a child for seven days in our charge,” he said, “we never lose it.”

Despite Couney’s success, there were numerous ways this type of endeavor could lead to tragedy. When St. Louis planned their 1904 World’s Fair, they decided they wanted an incubator exhibit, but not Couney.

They contracted the lowest bidder, a doctor named Joseph Hardy who “was fully licensed and apparently utterly ignorant of how to care for a preemie.” After the exhibit had been open for a bit, a Humane Society examination found that out of 43 children cared for, 39 had died. Couney published an open letter in the New York Evening Journal calling it “the crime of the decade” and claiming Hardy and his staff “did not know the difference between an incubator and a peanut roaster.” While changes were made, including hiring a new doctor, the exhibit stayed open.



In time, Couney offered genuine evidence of his success. He held reunions, inviting children who been saved in his incubators. In 1909 in Chicago, he even held a “best preemie” competition.

“That Sunday morning, the children were brought in dressed in their finest attire,” Raffel writes. “Ruffles and ribbons, buttons and bows. Martin, fluent in baby talk as any other tongue, was having the time of his life.”

The winner, a 3-year-old named Burton who was judged the “healthiest, handsomest, and best-developed,” was awarded a little red wagon.

Sometimes, his successes came to him. At the 1939 World’s Fair, he was approached by a 19-year-old woman who said she was one of the babies he had saved. Her name was Lucille Conlin. She was Marion and Woolsey Conlin’s surviving daughter. She went on to become a nurse.

Throughout his decades of saving babies, Couney understood there were better options. He tried to sell, or even donate, his incubators to hospitals, but they didn’t want them. He even offered all his incubators to the city of New York in 1940, but was turned down.

Raffel offers several possible reasons for this. The difficulty of operating the machines was one. “Doctors didn’t have the resources or trained personnel to use [incubators] properly,” she says. “An incubator is a labor-intensive process. You had to have specially trained nurses and a low nurse-to-patient ratio. It was too much work for them.”

Given the popularity of eugenics in the US at the time, there also wasn’t much sympathy for these children.

“You had a raging climate of eugenics which did not directly target preemies, but did directly target children who had severe disabilities,” Raffel says. “It was an environment where we only wanted to produce the fittest babies. That was a very strong cultural undercurrent. People just felt like these children were not worth saving.”

Couney died in 1950 at age 80. That he had closed his exhibit only seven years prior is a testament both to his dedication to helping children, and the failure of the medical establishment to take on the crucial job of saving their lives.

“In 1943, Cornell New York Hospital opened the city’s first dedicated premature infant station,” Raffel writes. “That same year, Dr. Martin Couney closed his show for the final time. He said his work was done.”

<https://nypost.com/.../how-fake-docs-carnival-sideshow-broug.../>

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### **LEAVE IT TO THE DUTCH**

### **DUTCH HYPERLOOP PLAN EYES PARIS TO AMSTERDAM IN 90 MINUTES**

*Francesca Street, CNN*



Proposals to create a Hyperloop network that would carry passengers from Amsterdam to Paris in less than 90 minutes are under discussion in the Netherlands after a study that says the hi-tech link could be economically viable.

Hyperloop is a proposed transport mode that involves traveling in a sleek, pod-like capsule that's propelled through a low-pressure steel tube at speeds of over 600 miles per hour.

Supposedly more sustainable than aviation and speedier than today's top-speed trains, Hyperloop's advocates say it's the future of cross-country, and even cross-continental, travel.

Earlier this month, Dutch start up Hardt Hyperloop announced the results of a study carried out in collaboration with the province of North Holland which examined the experimental travel idea. The report showed that a European-wide Hyperloop network would significantly shorten commuting times between European cities, blurring borders and offering "remarkable economic benefits."

Better connecting the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area to other European hubs, the study suggested, would improve business travel and "strengthen the economic value of the province."

**The report says Hyperloop could ferry 200,000 passengers per hour, per direction. Travelers could reach Paris in 90 minutes -- less than half the time it currently takes by train, and roughly the same time as a direct flight, without the need for airport connections. Amsterdam to Brussels would take less than an hour via Hyperloop, the study suggests.**

**This investigation marks the next stage in Hardt Hyperloop's grand plan, following the opening of a test facility in June 2019.**

**Last year, the company's CEO and co-founder Tim Houter told CNN Travel that Hardt Hyperloop's proposed European network would provide an "alternative for the polluting short haul flights."**

**Alternative to air travel?**

*Hardt Hyperloop*

**Hyperloop could ferry 200,000 passengers per hour in one direction.**



**On paper, it sounds like a win, but questions remain over Hyperloop's feasibility.**

**Part of the technology's appeal is its sci-fi credentials -- the idea of sleek, streamlined pods and levitating in a tube across county -- but the concept's still in its early stages.**

**There are concerns about whether the pods will be suitable for all ages and how easy it would be to evacuate a pod in case of an emergency. Plus, big money needs to be invested to get it off the ground and governments need to be on side.**

**Still, Jereon Olthof, North Holland's mobility deputy, said he was intrigued by the recent study, calling the benefits "very promising."**

**"That is why we will engage in discussions with other authorities to progress this research," he said in a statement.**

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### **THE HISTORY OF 'APRONS'**

**A Lot of Memories!!!!**

*Submitted by Peter Hamer*

**I don't think most kids today know what an apron is. The principle use of Mom's or Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she only had a few. It was also because it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and aprons used less material.**

**But along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.**

**It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.**

**From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.**

**When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids..**

**And when the weather was cold, she wrapped it around her arms.**

**Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove.**

**Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.**

**From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls.**

**In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.**

**When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.**

When dinner was ready, she walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men folk knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes.

**REMEMBER:**

Mom's and Grandma's used to set hot baked apple pies on the windowsill to cool. Her granddaughters set theirs on the windowsill to thaw.

They would go crazy now trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron.

I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron - but love

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### **'WOMAN ON A HUNGER TREK'**



The Koerierster is a monument to the women of Leeuwarden who made trips into the countryside in order to find food for their families and for fugitives hiding from the Nazis.

The monument was the initiative of a fugitive staying with the Haanstra family, who kept him alive on the food gathered by the three Haanstra sisters on their many treks.

The monument was designed by Dutch sculptress Tineke Bot and unveiled on May 4, 1981, in the presence of the Haanstra sisters: A. van der Steeg-Haanstra, G. Stelpenstra-Haanstra and G. de Vries-Haanstra.

*It is situated in the Prinsentuin (Princes Garden), a public park in Leeuwarden.*

*Photo by Rick Gleichmann*

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### **'I WAS FOUND AS A BABY WRAPPED IN MY MUM'S COAT – BUT WHO AM I?'**

*By Claire BatesBBC News (Edited)*



Tony May was only a few weeks old when he was abandoned by the River Thames in London, in the middle of World War Two. He had no idea who his parents were for more than 70 years. Then a DNA detective dug up the truth about his past.

A few days before Christmas, in 1942, a baby boy was brought into a police station near the Houses of Parliament in London.

He had been found wrapped in a bright blue woman's coat on Victoria Embankment, a road lined with trees and occasional benches that runs along the north bank of the Thames. The boy was judged to be one month old and, after no-one came forward to claim him, he was allotted a birthday. He also needed a name. It was common at the time to refer to the place a child was found - and so he became Victor Banks.

"I always wondered who they were, you know? And why I would have been abandoned, I think that's the main thing."

Tony May is sitting in an old easy chair in his flat in St Albans, just to the north of London. There are jazz CDs piled on a side table, and photos of trumpet players on the wall.





"I used to run a club on the jazz circuit," he tells me. "We'd get musicians who had played at Ronnie Scott's."

"My mum and dad, Arthur and Ivy, didn't have any brothers or sisters so they had friends who we called aunt and uncle. They were lovely to me."

The couple adopted Victor Banks when he was a toddler in 1944, changing his name to Tony May. They went on to adopt a little girl called Eleanor who became Tony's sister. Tony remembers being told he was adopted when he was about seven.

"It was no big deal really. But I remember my sister went around telling everyone we were adopted and I was so embarrassed."

*Tony and his sister, Eleanor*



When he was growing up, Tony was particularly close to his father.

"My dad was very bright but although he was very interested in sport, he was no good at it at all. When he realised I was good at it, he used to give me and my friend Mick cricket catching practice every night. He'd come home from the bank - I can see him now with his hat and umbrella - and he'd come down the garden to help us. And he'd take me to see major sporting events at White City stadium in London.

"I became a very good cricketer and schoolboy athlete because he believed in me. And when you're adopted you need people to believe in you."

Tony's adoption was rarely mentioned by his parents.

"I remember once my dad knocked on my bedroom door when I was a teenager and asked what music I was listening to," Tony says.

"It was John Coltrane on tenor sax playing ballads. He said: 'Do you think you play such mournful music because you're adopted?' I said: 'No Dad, this is world-class music played all over the world.' He said: 'Oh, OK then.' That was that there was no dialogue about it."

Tony only discovered he had been found as a baby on his wedding day, at the age of 23.

"My dad sidled over to me after the service," he says.

"He told me that when I got back from my honeymoon, he'd have an envelope for me with my exam passes and adoption order. He said: 'There's a word on it that you might not know, the word *foundling*. Just letting you know.' I didn't twig for ages what it meant. It was much later that I realised I'd been abandoned."

Tony went into banking, like his father, and then into recruitment. He also had two children.

Looking back, he wonders whether not knowing where he came from did affect him, despite what he told his father about the music he'd been listening to that day.

"I worried a lot about things going wrong, which meant I worked extra hard at getting things right. It did mean when the auditors came around at work I knew I'd get a clean sheet. "Though I laugh and joke and muck about, I'm not tactile. I'm fairly reserved, I would say, about showing emotion. But I can cry my eyes out watching a rugby match."

It wasn't until his adoptive parents had died that Tony felt ready to investigate where he came from.

His first port of call was the London Record Office, where he was amazed to find out he wasn't allowed to look at his own adoption file. The rules at that time stipulated that a social worker had to go in and make notes in pencil on his behalf.





The file revealed that after being found on Victoria Embankment on 19 December 1942 he was taken to the old Canon Row police station near Westminster Bridge - but there was no mention of who had found him or at what time of day. After being examined at a hospital in Chelsea, he was evacuated to Easneye Nursery in Ware, Hertfordshire, away from the risk of bombing.

Little Victor first met Arthur and Ivy May at Easneye. Before they were allowed to adopt him they fostered him for a year and Tony is visibly moved as he reads out a welfare report from that time. "Date on which visit made: 5 November 1943. Is the child well cared for? The answer is: 'She devotes her whole time and attention to the baby and he is responding well to individual care and is becoming interested in people and things.' Are the applicants satisfied with the child? 'They are very pleased with him and delighted to have a baby of their own.'"

"That's lovely, that," Tony says, tapping the table for emphasis.

Letters in Tony's file reveal the Mays wrote to the authorities to see if they could find out any more about his history. The reply was definitive - exhaustive inquiries had been carried out to trace the parents, but all efforts had been unsuccessful.

Having reached this dead end, Tony then took his story to the media in the hope it might jog someone's memory. He appeared on radio, TV and in newspapers in the mid-1990s. Some nurses who had worked at the Easneye nursery during the war came forward, but Tony was no closer to finding out about the circumstances of his birth.

"I had given up. I thought, 'No man can do more than I have done, so that's it,'" he says. Then, four years ago, Tony joined a Facebook group for foundlings. They swapped stories about their lives and their theories about why they might have been left.

Tony thought he could be the result of a liaison between a British woman and an American GI. It's estimated that about 22,000 children were born in this way between 1942 and 1945.

"I was found in London and I know this is an area where it was happening," he says.

He mentioned his theory in the Facebook group, and it was a move that would change his life. The post was spotted by Julia Bell, a genetic genealogist who has used DNA to track down American servicemen who fathered children during World War Two.

Julia's first successful case was working out who her own GI grandfather was.



*DNA detective Julia Bell was looking for a new challenge*

"My mother was over the moon to find out. Her father had died in 2009 but she had five brothers and sisters living all over the US. They send her presents for her birthday."

Julia was inspired by her experience to work on other GI cases, but she was now looking for a new challenge.

"I was finding the American servicemen cases very easy. They all knew who their mothers were, but not their fathers. I thought, 'How about giving that gift of knowing where you come from to people who don't know who either side was?'"

She had started looking at foundling cases when she came across Tony's Facebook post, so she introduced herself and offered to help free of charge. "I thought, why not?" Tony says.

"I've tried everything you know, if you like you might as well go for it. I didn't think she'd be successful. How can you possibly be from so little information?"

And he was right that the case was a tough one, in fact it was the hardest that Julia had ever attempted to crack.

The first thing Julia did was search newspaper archives, where she found a small article from 20 December 1942 reporting Tony's discovery.

It read: "A blue-eyed boy four weeks old, wrapped in a bright blue jacket, part of a woman's costume, has been found abandoned on the Embankment." Julia wondered whether



this could be a sign that Tony was left in a hurry, and that perhaps it hadn't been planned. She then turned to DNA, which she was convinced could help unravel Tony's case. It was 2016, and there had been a massive increase in the number of people in the US and the UK using DNA testing kits to research their family history.

Her first step was to send off a saliva sample from Tony to one of several privately owned companies that offer DNA matching with other clients on their database.

The amount of DNA we share with other people is measured in centimorgans. The number ranges from single digits for distant cousins to 3,400 centimorgans for a parent and child.

The test revealed a woman called Deborah in Toronto, who appeared to be about a third cousin of Tony's, judging from the amount of DNA they shared. But this promising link proved a dead end. Julia realised Deborah was most likely related to Tony on her father's side, and Deborah said she didn't know who her father was.

After Deborah, Tony's closest relation was a fourth cousin called June, in Scotland. That meant she probably shared with Tony a pair of great-great-great-grandparents, who lived sometime in the 1800s.

"Now June had more of a complete tree, which she was willing to share with me," Julia says. To find out which ancestor pair Tony and June shared, Julia searched the databases of the DNA-matching companies and found someone who was a cousin of both Tony and June at a similar distance.

"It's called triangulating," Julia explains. "I found an ancestor pair living in the 1860s that all three people shared. Then I created a chart with all the different possible lines of descent, with every marriage and every birth.

"I looked for people further down the lines who were living descendants and asked them to do a DNA test. Each time I found a closer match that would help me refocus and refocus, getting closer to my goal."

By a closer match, Julia means a cousin closer to Tony in his family tree, sharing a larger amount of DNA. The most common DNA test examines the pairs of chromosomes inherited from each parent (except the pair of sex chromosomes), but Julia also got Tony to do another test that looked at mitochondrial DNA, which is passed from mother to child via the egg cell.

It suggested a strong maternal link to Lanarkshire, in the central lowlands of Scotland.

It was slow and painstaking work but towards the end of 2018 Julia identified a couple she thought could be Tony's maternal grandparents, who had lived in Kirkcaldy, north of Edinburgh. They had a son still living in Scotland called Bill who was in his 90s and was reluctant to do a test. However Bill's daughter, Kathleen, agreed to help once she heard Tony's story. The results showed Kathleen was almost certainly his first cousin. "So I'm thinking it's most likely that Tony's mother was Bill's sister,"

Julia says.

"Bill had a sister called Mary who died in 1988. Mary had had two children - a son, Peter, who had died in 2006, but also a daughter called Sheena, who was still living." After thinking about it long and hard, Sheena agreed to meet Julia.

*Mary with Sheena's father*



"Well this was back in January 2019," Sheena says, sitting across from me in her conservatory in Kettering, Northamptonshire. "My cousin Kathleen had explained to me about Julia and this person who was looking for his parents. I thought whoever this Tony is deserves to know who his family is, but I didn't click at all what it had to do with me. "She came here and told me, 'I'm 80% sure that your mum is Tony's mother.' Well you could have knocked me over with a feather, I knew nothing about it!

**"I thought, 'How could my mum have done it?' And then I thought, 'What must she have been through to feel she had to do something like that?' If only she'd been able to talk to us."**

**Sheena agreed to take the test and it confirmed Sheena was indeed Tony's half-sister. Julia went to Tony's house to tell him the news.**

**"When she came I had a friend with me, who was writing it all down. It was a hell of a lot to absorb," Tony says. "It was strange, I felt much less happy than I thought I would do. It didn't have as huge an effect as I thought it would. But then I heard Sheena was willing to meet me, that was a big bonus." Sheena and her husband, George Haig, only live an hour's drive away from Tony and they agreed to meet him and Julia at a hotel. "I just thought it was unbelievable. That I'm hugging the daughter of the woman who abandoned me and that she had been prepared to meet me," Tony says. "Sheena gave me an album full of old photographs of the family. It was just lovely. She's a great girl."**

*Sheena, Tony, and the family photos*



**Sheena immediately noticed something familiar about Tony.**

**"He walked in and I thought: 'That's my mum walking towards me.' He was so much like her it was scary. I just couldn't take my eyes off him."**

**Over time, Sheena, 65, has helped Tony build a picture of their mother.**

**Mary married Sheena's father in 1946 and had two children.**

**They moved to Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, when Sheena was two. However, they came back to the UK after her father was injured in a car accident. He never left hospital and Mary raised Peter and Sheena alone.**

**"She had a hard life but she was a loving person. She'd do anything for anybody," Sheena says. "I've missed her more this year than I've done in a long time."**

**Meanwhile, Julia was still at work trying to find Tony's biological father. She discovered Mary had been married once before, which was a complete surprise to Sheena.**

**"Julia told us mum had married a man from Kirkcaldy called James on 1 August 1942, but she applied for a divorce in 1946," she says.**

**As Tony was born in late November or early December, Julia knew Mary would have been about five months pregnant at the time of the wedding. Although the DNA hadn't indicated a strong Scottish lineage on Tony's paternal side, Julia decided to follow up the lead.**

**She found out that James had gone on to remarry after his divorce from Mary and had had a daughter called Anita. When Anita was approached and told about Tony's story, her response took everyone by surprise. "Her first words to us were along the lines of: 'Thank goodness he's fine,'" Julia says. Anita says discovering the existence of Tony has laid to rest a family mystery that had troubled her for most of her life.**

**"I'd heard a whisper of a story but I was never sure it was true," she says. "I was anything between eight and 10. I heard raised voices and I was listening at the door. I just heard, 'Oh, it's awful you know that a baby was left.' That would have been my mother speaking and my father was saying things like, 'You weren't there. It was dreadful, she was in a terrible state and she was going to jump off a bridge and I had to calm her down.'"**



*The young Mary Hunter*



It's not clear if James knew Mary was pregnant when they got married, but Anita says her father insisted the baby wasn't his. Her understanding was that this led to some sort of argument between James and Mary in London. At the time, James was in the military and serving on the south coast.

Perhaps Mary came down with the baby from Kirkcaldy to meet him?

"I suppose that's how the abandonment happened," Anita says.

"My father removed Madie [Mary] from the baby to calm her down and perhaps - I think I remember hearing my mum saying something like 'Did you never go back to see if it was still there?'"

And I remember him saying 'Of course I did, but obviously the baby wasn't there.'"

This is a second-hand account, told decades later, but it does suggest that both Mary and James were involved in leaving Tony on Victoria Embankment. An action that their children think profoundly affected both of them for the rest of their lives. Mary had always told her daughter, Sheena, that her brother, Peter, had been a twin, but that the other baby had been stillborn. Sheena's cousin recently revealed she'd once asked their gran about the stillborn baby.

"My gran had been there at Peter's birth and apparently she said that was a load of rubbish, there was only one baby. So we now think that was my mum trying to make sense of it," Sheena says.

Anita said her father, James, was delighted when she had three girls and seemed uncomfortable around baby boys.

"He was a very supportive and helpful person. It just seems such an out-of-character thing for him and I think it weighed heavily on him," she says.

"In fact, in his late 70s he tried to take his own life and was treated for severe depression. I think the incident in 1942 with the baby [is something] he'd carried all those years and felt guilt and shame for. I think it contributed to his suicide attempt."

Both Sheena and Anita wish their parents could have known that Tony had been found and adopted. Anita took a DNA test that confirmed what her father had always said, he was not Tony's father. So

Julia's hunt continued, looking at DNA databases and creating numerous family trees using birth, marriage and death records. She narrowed down her search to two family lines based in Yorkshire and Hertfordshire. This meant he was unlikely to be a GI as Tony had first supposed.

Then, just a few months after finding Tony's mother, Julia hit the jackpot with his father. She discovered a 1906 marriage that seemed to bring those two lines together. The marriage resulted in a son called Eric.

"I found this man called Eric Wisbey who looked to me to be the dad. I approached some living relatives who told me he had gone to Australia," Julia says.



*Eric Wisbey emigrated to Australia*

"Eric had died in 2004 and he had a son called Ken who had died in 2011. But Ken had a daughter called Leesa and she agreed to do a DNA test." Leesa lives in Wodonga, on the border of New South Wales and Victoria. "I Googled Julia Bell's name to make sure that it wasn't a hoax," she says over Skype. "You never know nowadays. And then I thought, 'Well, it's not going to hurt me.' So I agreed and she sent the test over."

The results came back a month later and confirmed Leesa was Tony's half-niece. This meant Julia was correct and Eric Wisbey was Tony's father.

Tony was amazed to discover he had family on the other side of the world.

"I have got a father that went out to Australia and now I've spoken to my father's granddaughter out there over the internet. These are huge bonuses," he says.

Leesa was able to tell Tony a little about his father.

"Eric was sort of a reserved fella, sometimes he'd take my brother, dad and I fishing," she says. He was a painter and decorator who moved around the state of Victoria. After his wife, Leesa's grandmother, died, he married one of her friends.

But how did Eric Wisbey, from the south of England, come to meet Mary Hunter from Scotland?



Leesa pulled out her grandfather's war records, which revealed he was in the Army Pay Corps in World War Two. In 1942 he was stationed in Edinburgh, 11 miles across the Firth of Forth from Mary's hometown of Kirkcaldy.

At the time Mary was 22 and living with her parents, while Eric was 35 and married with a young son back in Brighton. So how did this unlikely couple get together? Mary's brother, Bill - who has since died aged 93 - was asked if he could remember anything from that time.

"He remembered an older guy coming to stay at the house because he had to share a room with him," Sheena says.

"He was 15 years or so older than my mum and he said he thinks she'd had an affair with him. But he doesn't remember her being pregnant or a baby being born."

Sheena and George have speculated that Eric was billeted with the Hunter family, and was perhaps involved in paying the munition workers in the town. But did Eric ever find out that Mary was pregnant? Leesa reveals a tantalising clue.

"I had rung my mum to tell her about what was going on with Julia and then mum spoke to John, who was my dad's friend. And John said Dad had told him he thought he had a half-brother or had an inkling. I don't know how Dad got that information. I wish he was still alive so we could ask him about it."

Eric Wisbey left Scotland in 1943 after he moved from the Pays Corps to the Intelligence Corps. By 1944 he was stationed in India.

"He didn't really like speaking about the war and we never asked him about it. We found his records in a drawer," Leesa says. Sheena thinks her mother was left in an impossible position.

"Whether he knew about it or not, Eric was married and quite a lot older than my mum. Then he went off to Australia. I think he got off scot free," she says. "I feel angry and bitter that my mum felt she had to hide it all. What she must have gone through for the rest of her life, to my mind, is absolutely heart-breaking."

For Tony, the discoveries have helped him better understand why he was left on the Embankment. But he says he has never blamed his mother for leaving him.

"I wish I could tell her 'I'm sorry you had to do it,'" he says. "I was sure she wouldn't have abandoned me without a damn good reason."

His relationship with his half-sister has gone from strength to strength. Sheena and her husband, George, have met Tony's sister, Eleanor, while Tony has gone to watch his half-niece, Jessica, sing at a concert in London.

Tony is now looking forward to introducing Sheena and her family to his children and grandchildren.

"When Julia first told me she had a result I think I was a bit stunned," Tony says.

"But now I've met my half-sister, I've corresponded with my half-niece in Australia. I'm looking forward to introducing my son and daughter to Sheena's family. It's given me a new lease of life."

For full story and more pictures; <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-53447901?fbclid=IwAR1q0PBRkVjwr--MpzsEOLMtQepob3JVwp9Mp01jaTKZseSkzyNhBJ0UOkk>



### ITS TRUE

December 24, 1971, crash of LANSa Flight 508.

Juliane Koepcke, 17, was sucked out of an airplane after it was struck by lightning. She fell 2 miles to the ground still strapped to her chair and lived. However, she had to endure a 9-day walk through the Amazon jungle before being rescued by loggers. She was the sole survivor of 93 passengers and crew in the

<https://instagram.com/PicsHistorical>

## **DUTCH WOMAN OPENS ANIMAL SHELTER TO SAVE STARVING FLAMINGOS**

*By Andrea Powell*



**Wild flamingos in Bonaire, Netherlands were starving to death. They had no one to care for them and many were malnourished. Elly Albers saw the need and decided to do something to help the flamingos.**

**Elly is the owner of Mangrove Information Center, guided kayak and solar boat tours of the mangroves, and noticed all the starving wild birds. She decided to open an animal shelter, Bonaire Wild Bird Rehab, on the**

**island to care and feed the wild birds. She takes in sick, injured and orphaned birds and nurses them back to health. Once they are healthy and strong she returns them to the wild.**

**A typical day for Elly starts with feeding hungry birds at 7am.**

**Originally, there were roughly 40 flamingos that would come for breakfast, but within a few months the number grew to hundreds.**

**She says “I think it’s better that there’s a place they can eat and then they can fly away.” Although, some of the wild flamingos choose to hang out at the shelter for the day. She said**



**they all have unique personalities. “They’re just like dogs and cats.”**

**The rest of her day is spent caring for the chicks and releasing rehabilitated birds to the wild. She could not care for all the birds without the help from volunteers. They come to the shelter to help bottle feed chicks, care for injured birds and help release them back to the wild.**



**“It’s also nice to see that there are many people in the world who do love animals, who have passion and empathy.”**

**The team releases the flamingos on the cove near the breeding grounds and wishes them luck. “The flamingos need to remain wild. They need to go back to their own habitat.”**

**The shelter is not open for visitors as all the animals are wild. Currently, there are 60-80 young flamingos that choose**







to reside in the front of the Mangrove Center. While this is not ideal, the birds are healthy and the shelter hopes they will return to the wild soon.

In the meantime, the shelter posted, "If you visit the mangrove center or if you drive to Lac, please slow down, because you will very likely encounter many juvenile flamingos on your path."

People like Elly and all the volunteers help restore our faith in humanity. Together, we can make a difference.

Watch how starving flamingos are given a second chance in the video:  
<https://blog.theanimalrescuesite.greatergood.com/bonaire-flamingo-rescue/>

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### **HELP NEEDED**

We've had a request for help from Tobias Pulver  
 Tobias writes

Good afternoon,

I am a descendant of a large Dutch family who emigrated to Australia in the midst of WWII. Sadly, I have never had the opportunity to talk, let alone meet that [large] part of my family. I am the son of Karen Backers - the daughter of John Hubertus Backers. My mother had three uncles, brothers of John Hubertus: Hans, Leo and Helmut, and also an auntie Paula. I am trying to get in touch with John. He would be around 80 years of age.

I was wondering if your organisation might have any knowledge of the Backers (originally Bakkers[?]) family, or whether you might be able to give me any advice on how to locate John H. Backers and his contact details.

Thanks so much  
 - Tobias.

If you can help Tobias please contact him direct on

[tobias.pulver@hotmail.com](mailto:tobias.pulver@hotmail.com)

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### **INTERESTING WEB SITES**

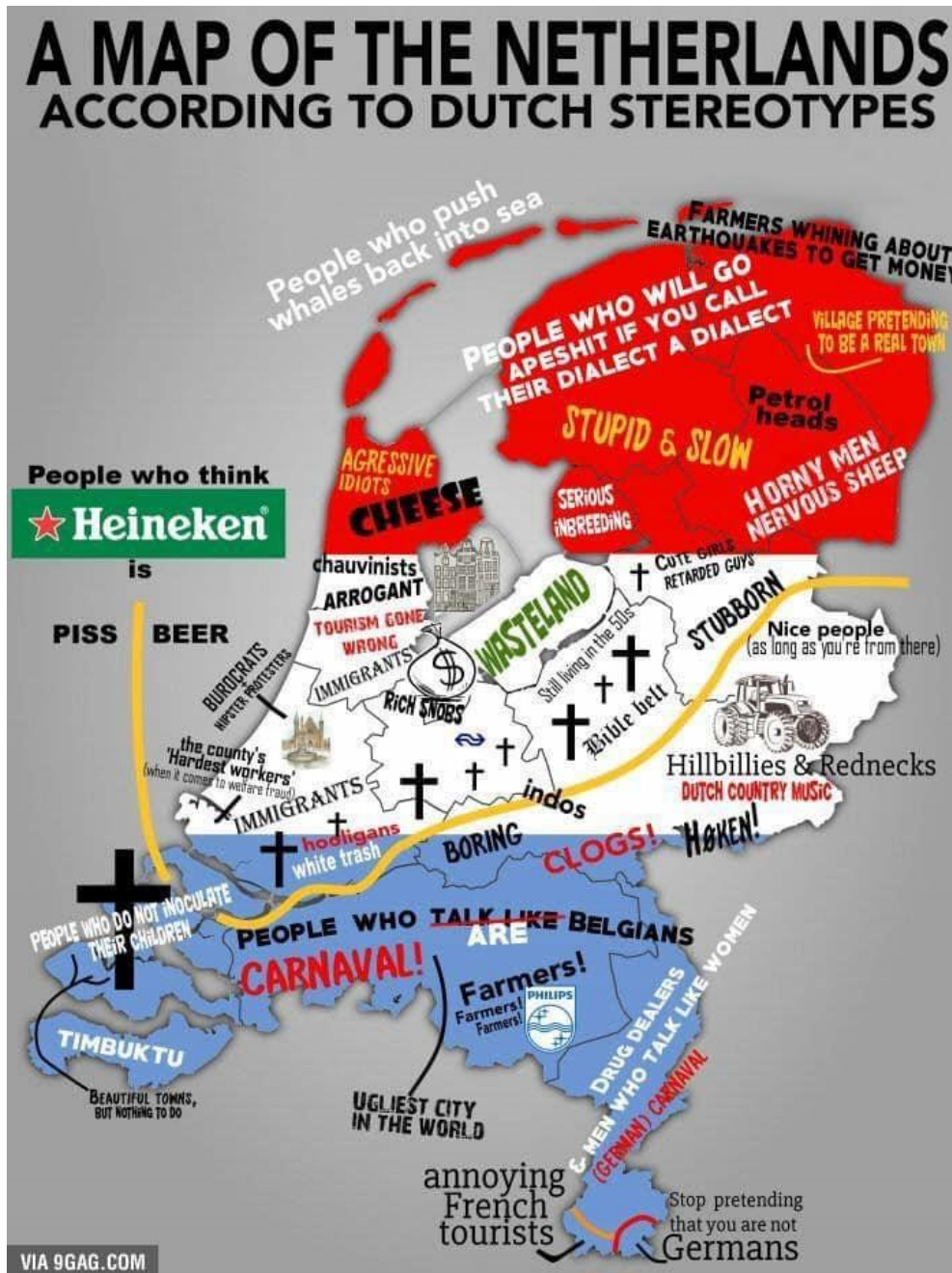
<https://www.facebook.com/dutchculture099/videos/2405332296439966>

Why do the Dutch wear orange

.....

"There is no king who has not had a slave among his ancestors, and no slave who has not had a king among his." — Helen Keller

YOU'VE GOT TO LAUGH



IF YOU NO LONGER WISH TO RECEIVE THIS LETTER PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO  
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