

The Family of Jan Pieterse Mebie of Schenectady

by

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Published accounts of the family of Jan Pieterse Mebie of Schenectady have long contained conflicting and erroneous statements.

In *Early History of Schenectady, New York and its First Settlers*, [Albany, NY, Van Benthuysen Printing House, 1879 Reprint by Heritage Books, Inc., 1999] John Sanders stated that Jan died 8 April 1725, "leaving surviving him three sons and five daughters." Sanders then proceeds to discuss the three sons, whom he describes as "Pieter, the eldest son", "Abraham, the second son", and "Jacob, the third son." The birth dates given by Sanders for these three sons are 20 January 1696 (Peter), 26 June 1695 (Abraham) and 1 March 1698 (Jacob). It would appear that the year for Peter was a typographical error, since he was described by Sanders as the eldest son.

A few years prior to Sanders, in *Genealogies of the Descendants of the First Settlers of the Patent and City of Schenectady from 1662 to 1800*, [Albany, N.Y., 1873; Reprinted Genealogical Publishing Co., 1998] Jonathan Pearson had given similar, although more complete information. According to Pearson, Jan Pieterse Mebie and his wife, Anna Borsboom, had the following nine children (in the order given): Pieter (baptized 20 January 1686), Catherina (died 1773, aged 82 years, 2 months, 17 days), Annatje (baptized 16 April 1693), Abraham (baptized 26 June 1695), Engeltie (baptized 10 November 1697), Jacob (born 1 March 1698, baptized 5 May 1700), Maritje (no dates given), Meittje (baptized 7 October 1704), and Margaret (no dates given).

Pearson also referred to the Will of Jan Pieterse Mebie, stating only that Jan "made his will April 3, 1725, proved September 13, 1725, and died April 8, 1725." An examination of Jan's Will reveals the first sign of errors in both Pearson and Sanders. In the Will, Jan refers to "my three sons, Peter, Jacob and Abraham" and his seven daughters, only one of whom (Margaret) is mentioned by name. Therefore, it is clear that Jan had 10 children, not the 8 or 9 that have been attributed to him by Sanders and Pearson. Moreover, Jan also referred to Pieter as his eldest son, Jacob as "my second son" and Abraham as the youngest.

One major problem in documenting the children of Jan Pieterse Mebie and Anna Borsboom is that the baptismal records have been lost for dates prior to 11 April 1694 for the Schenectady Reformed Church and 5 August 1683 for the Reformed Dutch Church of Albany. Therefore, some reconstruction is necessary.

Examination of the baptismal records of the Reformed Dutch Church of Albany, NY [*Records of the Reformed Dutch Church of Albany, New York*, excerpted from *Year Books* of The Holland Society of New York. Reprinted for Clearfield Company, Inc. by Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1999] reveals the baptismal records for two of Jan's children: son Pieter, on 20 January 1686 and daughter Annetje, on 16 April 1693.

20 Jan 1686, Baptism of Pieter, father Jan Pietersz
witnesses: Abraham van Trigt, Lysbeth van Trigt

16 Apr 1693, Baptism of Annetje, parents Jan Pietersz Mebi and Antje P. Bosboom
witnesses: Jan Hendriksz Vrooman, Cornelia Pieterse van Olinda

Examination of the baptismal records of the Schenectady Reformed Church [Records of the First Reformed Church of Schenectady, NY, LDS Film #534207] reveals baptisms for another four children of Jan and Anna: Abraham (26 June 1695), Engeltje (10 November 1697), Maria (5 May 1700) and Metje (7 October 1704).

Note that there is no baptism record for Jacob on 5 May 1700 as claimed by Pearson.

26 Jun 1695, Baptism of Abraham, parents Jan Pieterse Mebi and Annetje Bosboom
witnesses: Gerrit Simonse and Antje Sanders

10 Nov 1697, Baptism of Engeltje, parents Jan Mebi and Annetje Bosboom
witnesses: Jacobus Peek and Jannetje Reyers

5 May 1700, Baptism of Maria, parents: Jan Mabi and Anna Borsboom
witnesses: Jacobus van Dyck and Sara Peeck

7 Oct 1704, Baptism of Meibtye (Metje or Martha), parents: Jan Meby and Antye Boosboom
witness: Lysebit Tonissen

Thus, there exist baptismal records for 6 of the 10 children mentioned in Jan's will. The 4 remaining children require more in-depth analysis.

Further examination of the records of the Schenectady Reformed Church reveals the fact that an Eva Mebie married Cornelius Slingerlant on 28 May 1699.

28 May 1699, marriage of Cornelius Slingerlant, j.m. Albany, and Eegfe Mebi, j.d., Schenectady

Note that Eva was not listed by Pearson as a child of Jan. An examination of the baptismal records for the first four children of Cornelius and Eva (all from the Schenectady Reformed Church) reveals witnesses who clearly tie Eva to the family of Jan Pieterse Mebie and Anna Borsboom:

9 Jan 1700, Baptism of Engeltje, parents: Cornelius Slingerlant and Aeche Mebi
witnesses: Gerrit Gysbertsen, Marritje Pieterssen

3 Apr 1703, Baptism of Anna, parents: Kornelis Slingerlant and Eva Mebie
witnesses: Jan Mebie and Anna Bosboom

25 Aug 1705, Baptism of Maria, parents: Cornelius Slingerlait and Eva Meby
witnesses: Johans Mingal and Maria Meby

30 Apr 1707, Baptism of Lysbeth, parents: Cornelius Slingerlandt and Eva Mebi
witnesses: Victor Pootman and Grietje Mebi

Marritje Pieterssen is the sister of Anna Borsboom. Maria Meby is the sister of Jan. Grietje Mebi who married Victor Pootman is another daughter of Jan and Anna. Grietje is the only daughter mentioned by name in Jan's will. Therefore, the conclusion that Eva was, in fact, a daughter of Jan and Anna appears reasonable. But when was Eva born?

Her marriage in 1699 suggests the probability that Eva was born prior to the time in 1684 when any of the relevant church records begin, thus making her the eldest child of Jan and Anna.

Margaret, the only daughter named in Jan's will, married Victor Pootman on 13 December 1706 in the Reformed Dutch Church of Albany:

13 Dec 1706, Marriage of Victor Pootman, y.m. and Margarita Mebi, y.d., both live in Schenectady

In contrast, Anna (baptized 16 April 1693) and Catherine both married in the 1715 time frame. Therefore, we can reasonably estimate that Margaret was born in the 1684 to 1689 time frame. That would make her the second daughter of Jan and Anna.

From her tombstone (as cited by Pearson), it can be determined that Catherine was born in 1691. I find the fact that I can find no record of this tombstone rather disturbing. Moreover, there is no surviving record of Catherine's marriage to Arent Samuels Brat. However, the baptism of their first child is found in the records of the Schenectady Reformed Church:

16 Oct 1715, Baptism of Samuel, parents Arent Samuels Brat and Catrientien Mebi
witnesses: Jacobus Brat and Susanna Van Slyk

Thus, this record lends credence to Pearson's estimate of Catherine's birth year, making her the third daughter of Jan and Anna. Unaccounted for above is son Jacob. Because of the language in Jan's will, logic would dictate that Jacob was born sometime between 1686 and 1695. Note that both Sanders and Pearson have Jacob born 1 March 1698.

To further confuse things, there is a Census of Schenectady dated 16 June 1697 which lists the Jan Mebie household with 1 Man, 1 Woman and 6 Children. Since the 6 children born before June 1697 would include Eva, Margaret, Pieter, Catherine, Anna and Abraham, we are left to conclude that Jacob was not born yet. But, then how could he have been Jan's second son?

One possible explanation to this puzzle is found in the baptismal records of the Schenectady Reformed Church. Jan's wife, Anna Borsboom, had a younger sister named Tryntje Borsboom. It is fairly clear that she was the youngest of the Borsboom daughters. How young? Not too young to have received provisions after the burning of Schenectady in February 1689/90. Tryntje eventually married John Oliver (bans in the New York Reformed Dutch Church on 28 October 1705) and later Frans Couwenhoven (New York Reformed Dutch Church on 3 December 1709). However, more germane to the present discussion, Tryntje also had an illegitimate son baptized in Schenectady on 1 September 1699.

1 Sep 1699, Baptism of Jacobus, Parents: Tryntje Borsboom (no father named)
witnesses: Adam Vrooman and Anna Borsboom

While I have been unable to confirm this as fact, examination of other baptisms for illegitimate children indicates that these baptisms did not occur when the child was a new born infant, as was the custom for legitimate children. So, it would be quite possible that Jacob was born prior to June of 1695.

Therefore I propose the hypothesis that Jan Pieterse Mebie and his wife Anna Borsboom adopted Anna's nephew -- Jacob Borsboom -- and raised him as their "second son", Jacob Mebie.

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