
The Van Roekel Family

In the east-central part of the Netherlands is a province called Gelderland. It's the largest province in the country with three primary population centers — Nijmegen, Appeldoorn, and the capital city of Arnhem. About 10 miles northwest of Arnhem is a small cluster of buildings with a tiny population that's easy to overlook. It's called Roekel, and here is where the Van Roekel family began.

Long ago, the original name of Roekel was Roekelse Bosch, a name that described its physical and natural characteristics — a forest or “bosch” inhabited by large flocks of blackbirds called “roekel” in Dutch. In English we would refer to them as rooks or perhaps crows. Today, Roekel still stands on the edge of a largely wooded area on the southwest side of a national forest known as The Veluwe. The Van Roekel name was long ago used to identify someone who came from (van means from in Dutch) the village of Roekel. Spelling variations of the name do occur across the generations.

The oldest mention of the Van Roekel name is in reference to someone named Johan Van Roekel (probably not related) who lived in Roekel in 1328. From 1353 to 1446, a few Van Roekels appear in the records of Arnhem, and there are Van Roekels mentioned in connection with the town of Wageningen in 1714. Most Van Roekels in our family today are believed to descend from Willem Dirksen Backer Van Roekel of Bennekom. His name gives us some hints about his occupation and that of his father, too. That's because Willem's names are a combination of patronymic, occupational, and geographic naming conventions.

His middle name Dirksen indicates that he was the son of Dirk. His middle name Backer indicates that he was a baker, and of course, Van Roekel means he was from Roekel. While not formally documented, there are references to a Dirk Backer Van Roekel, who was born 30 years before Willem. He was Willem's father and the oldest known patriarch of the modern-day Van Roekel family.

To satisfy his curiosity about his ancestors and their history, Gijs Van Roekel of modern-day Maarn in the Netherlands has done considerable research on the Van Roekel family. In the process, he's collected extensive genealogical data. Gijs relates that he's been given a story by members of one branch of the Van Roekel family tree about an even earlier patriarch who lived in the late 1400s. The story has been handed down verbally over the generations from father to son for a very long time. According to this story, our family descends from someone named Jan de Bakker. De Bakker was the first martyr of Holland. The occupational reference to Bakker, even though spelled differently in both names is meaningful.



The Van Roekel Coat of Arms

A Family Legend —The Story of Jan Jansz de Bakker

Jan Jansz de Bakker was the son of Jan Dirksz de Bakker—an artisan and baker. It should be noted that the terms bakker and backer, were applied to those who baked both bread and bricks. Some references refer to him as a tenant of the local brick works, but other references suggest that he was a bread baker. Because of his skills, in about 1493, Jan Dirksz was appointed sexton of the church of Woerden where he was responsible for maintenance of both church and the surrounding graveyard. The name of his wife (young Jan's mother) is not known. Because of the penchant for early Europeans to take names related to both location and occupation, Jan Dirksz last name along with that of his children varies in both the verbal and written records and includes de Koster (Dutch for the Sexton), van Woerden (from Woerden), Woerdensis (Latin for the same), Custodis (Latin for the custodian), and Pistorius (Latin for baker). The last name Pistorius pops up after his death. Because the Latin name Pistorius is specific to the occupation of baking bread, it seems likely that Jan Dirksz' primary occupation was that of a bread baker and not a brick baker.

Young Jan was born in 1499 in Woerden, where he went to school until the age of 12. He studied reading, writing, mathematics, singing, and he learned the Psalms from the Bible. From 1511 to 1514, he attended the Cathedral school in Utrecht, where he received a fundamental Catholic education and sang in the choir.

In 1514, Jan Jansz de Bakker continued his education at the Hieronymus School in Utrecht. During his five-year stay, he was exposed to extensive discussion concerning the ideas of Martin Luther and the Reformation. One of his chief influencers was the school rector Hinne Rode who later, as a result of Luther's writings, became one of the first Dutch advocates of the Reformation.

This caused a problem for Jan's father who assumed he was training for the priesthood. Rumors of his son's heretical associations and his involvement in discussing those ideas soon spread to Woerden.

Fearing the eventual consequences, Jan Dirksz removed young Jan from the Hieronymus School and returned him to Woerden.

In 1520, just as the Reformation took root, Jan de Bakker was appointed to his father's post as church sexton. To his father's dismay, young Jan found this to be the perfect platform from which to start actively promoting Martin Luther's message. His words soon fell on fertile soil among the inhabitants of Woerden. Danger was on the horizon as church officials began issuing him repeated warnings. During this time, the Woerden government appointed him as schoolmaster, which gave him yet one more platform from which to speak. Church officials looked on this development with disgust but had to tolerate it since the town's government protected him. Thanks to Jan de Bakker, Woerden became one of the first places in Holland where the new doctrine of the Reformation caught on.

Meanwhile, Jan's father, hoping that it would get his son back on the right religious path, continued pushing Jan to finish his education as a Catholic priest. Returning to Utrecht was out of the question as it had become a hotbed of heretical ideas. Eventually, young Jan was convinced to continue his priestly education at the University of Leuven. While there, the Catholic Church banned the writings of Luther and began persecuting those they saw as heretics. Jan still clung to his heretical ideas, however, and after only a year, his father urgently requested that Jan return to Woerden. He came back without a degree, and to his father's dismay, he still promoted the Reformation.

Even though he had no degree, Jan's parents insisted on his ordination. And while he was resistant to the idea, Jan finally agreed because of the importance it held for his parents. The ordination took place in Utrecht. Because he was distrusted for advocating Luther's ideas, the Catholic Church arm-twisted him into renouncing Lutheranism. He paid a fine and was ordained at the age of 22. To his parent's satisfaction, Jan was finally a priest.

However, the Church remained suspicious of this young priest. They

assigned him to the parish at Jacobsvoude—a backwater part of the Netherlands with a dwindling population. Here they perceived he could do little damage. They were wrong. Jan began traveling around and openly preaching the Reformation far and wide across the region. The new doctrine was spreading, and the church knew that Jan was responsible.



Jan Jansz de Bakker – Our oldest ancestor?

Up in arms over his intransigence, the Catholic Church repeatedly warned Jan about his activities. He responded in typical fashion. First, he stopped celebrating the Mass. Then, assuming that older people were unlikely to change, he began ignoring them and preaching only to the youth. He stayed in Jacobsvoude for only a year.

Even though he was not a priest in Woerden, Jan returned there to spread his heretical message. Church officials in Utrecht called him to account for his activities. When Jan ignored their summons, he was arrested. But Jan was still popular with the population of Woerden, and the townspeople threatened a rebellion. After a short time, Jan was allowed to go free. As time went on, the situation in Woerden became increasingly dangerous for Jan. He left and went to Wittenberg for several months. Martin Luther was still in Wittenberg at this time, but it's unknown if Jan became personally acquainted with him during his stay there.

When he returned to Woerden in the summer of 1523, he was once again called by the clergy to appear before them. Again, Jan ignored them. In absentia, he was sentenced to three years of banishment and ordered to make a pilgrimage to Rome. Jan completely ignored these instructions, too, and began preaching Luther's ideas in earnest. Since he could no longer remain in Woerden, he began to wander throughout Holland supporting and encouraging communities that had turned away from the Pope in support of Lutheranism.

In 1523, Jan finally pushed the Catholic Church too far. He renounced his oath of celibacy and married a woman named Jacoba. Then they had children. He stopped wearing his vestments and stopped shaving his head. He openly criticized the Catholic Church's practice of "indulgences" or money paid to the church for forgiveness of sin. This caused a serious drop in church revenue wherever he went. Soon he was prohibited from entering any church.

Jan finally answered a summons from the town Council of Woerden. There he was examined by the town's new pastor who decided that things had gone far enough. The pastor lodged a formal complaint against the rebellious priest with Governess Margareta of Austria, the Bishop of Liège, and the Inquisitor General for the Netherlands. The case was sent to the Hof van Holland, and an order went out to arrest Jan de Bakker. He was imprisoned at The Hague and examined

repeatedly by the Inquisition. He was urged to revoke his heretical ideas, but Jan did not budge on his beliefs. However, he admitted that he was married.

After four months in prison, Jan was sentenced to die. The sentence read, *"To povre toe gebrant zulcx dat van hem geene memorie zij,"* which means *"To be executed in such a way, that no memory of him can survive."* On Friday, September 15, 1525, Jan was brought from the prison dressed in his priestly robes. The judgment was read. He was officially defrocked as a priest, and his robes were taken from him. Dressed in a simple yellow robe and cap, Jan was placed on a stone scaffold surrounded by a pile of wood and peat. A steel restraining band held his neck to the stake, and a bag of gunpowder was hung around his neck. As the executioner strangled him, the scaffold was set on fire. The coup de grace came when the gunpowder caught fire and exploded. According to written accounts, Jan Jansz de Bakker's final words were, *"Where oh Death is thy victory?"* Jan de Bakker, unrepentant anti-Catholic priest, was finally gone.

Threatened that she, too, might be executed, Jan's wife Jacoba recanted her heretical beliefs and was placed in the stocks at Woerden to make public penance. Most accounts relate that she spent much of the rest of her life in an Abbey. The children fled to Roekelse Bosch where they were said to have taken the name Van Roekel.

Unfortunately for the Catholic Church, memories of Jan Jansz de Bakker were not so easily erased. Over 300 years later in 1853, Dutch Protestants protested against the restoration of the episcopal hierarchy in their country. Their movement's slogan was "Protestants, wake up now, because remember Jan de Bakker!" In Woerden today, a street and a church-based school are named after Jan de Bakker. In The Hague, a stained-glass Jan de Bakker window can be seen in the St. Jacobskerk.

We will never know if our relationship to Jan de Bakker is true or not. What we do know for sure are the reasons why the Van Roekel family came to North America. We also know the facts of their migration.



Jan Jansz de Bakker burned at the stake for heresy

The Netherlands had long been under the domination of everyone from the Romans and Vikings to the Habsburgs, Spanish, and French. Dutch sovereignty was finally restored in 1813 with the collapse of the French Empire. The Vienna conference of 1815 confirmed the creation of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands with King William I of the House of Orange as its first monarch. The restoration, however, set the stage for the first Dutch migration.

The state church of the Netherlands had endured much humiliation under Napoleon, and seeing the formal church as a useful tool in the control of his new kingdom, King William immediately courted its favor. Only too happy to regain their former prominence, church officials responded wholeheartedly to his overtures. The results were predictable. Church government was placed in the hands of bureaucrats whose selection was subject to royal approval. All church property was transferred to the state. Church clergy were allowed to be educated only at one of three state sanctioned universities. The church became an instrument of state control, and the church's leadership was reduced to an oligarchy that survived only as long as King William was inclined to extend his patronage.

It wasn't long before conservative, traditional Christians throughout the country began noticing departures from doctrine that caused them great alarm. Church leadership did nothing to address their concerns, and problems soon developed. A general revolt against the Dutch Reformed Church soon grew up in the Netherlands, and it was led by those who would eventually be responsible for the greatest Dutch migration in the mid-19th century. As a result, nearly 250,000 Dutch peasants and rural artisans came to America during this time period. Some started Dutch communities in Michigan. Others came to the fertile plains of the Midwest. Their departure from Holland was called the "Afscheiding" or The Separation.

According to the 1912 book **The Hollanders of Iowa** by Jacob Vander Zee, most of these Dutch immigrants came to the US as members of "emigrant associations". These were organized in the old country for the sole purpose of facilitating the movement of entire groups of disaffected citizens to locations in the New World. One

factor set them apart from the stream of landless peasants and impoverished laborers heading to America from other parts of Europe at that time. This exodus was organized by pious, well-to-do Hollanders and included large numbers of the Dutch middle-class.

Vander Zee also tells us that the emigrant associations prohibited membership by anyone who was "*profane, immoral, or intemperate.*" Avowed atheists, skeptics, and Roman Catholics were also specifically excluded. Those members who had money were expected to take charge of one or more poor but deserving persons or families who decided to emigrate but could not afford to do so.

Predictably, the desire to leave gained a new urgency as King William clamped down on the religious separatists. The clergy who led the associations were declared unsuitable and unworthy. King William used the police to break up separatist meetings, and wholesale persecution became common. Eventually, the separatist leaders were excommunicated. Holland, a country long recognized for tolerance and freedom of worship, became something else for those who disagreed with King William's use of the church as a tool of power.

Two of the emigrant associations were formed in the Dutch province of Zuid Holland or South Holland by Albertus van Raalte and Henrik Scholte. Van Raalte led his association to Michigan. Scholte eventually became known as the "father of the separatists." He was the one who brought nearly 800 of his followers to Marion County, Iowa in 1847, where they established the town of Pella. More followed the next summer. Another large group, consisting of about 250 individuals, came in 1849. Others continued to arrive during the 1850s. One of them was a Van Roekel.

Migration slowed to a trickle with the start of the American Civil War, but when the war ended in 1865, Dutch immigration to the Iowa colony increased again. The Van Roekel story begins with the pre-Civil War migration and the establishment of Pella, but it did not begin with

my great-great-grandfather, Jan Harmen Van Roekel. Instead, it began with his younger brother Williem, who arrived with other Dutch immigrants in 1857.

The members of the earliest association sailed into Baltimore and then made their way by a combination of rail and canal boat to Pittsburgh. From there they traveled by steamboat on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers via St. Louis to Keokuk Iowa. Then their journey continued by covered wagon or on foot to Pella.

By the time the association members arrived, Scholte (who had arrived several months before them) had secured 18,000 acres of land. Already late August 1847, the new settlers began taming the Iowa frontier. Lacking a saw mill or an immediate plentiful supply of timber, the new arrivals built dugout houses. These were sunk partially in the ground. The dirt and sod that was removed was used to extend the walls above ground and to build a roof.

Much of the exposed part of the dwelling was slew grass, reeds, and interwoven twigs and straw. The settlers called their town a “*strooijen stad*” or straw town — a name that gave birth to a long-time Pella business named The Straw Town Inn.

What is known for certain about Willem is that he arrived on October 7, 1857 aboard a passenger ship named the Troy. It departed from Antwerp and arrived in New York City. His stated destination was Ohio, but by 1860, the US census showed he was living with the family of Teunis Van Vienschaten in Lake Prairie Township of Marion County Iowa. He was a farmhand for the Van Vienschaten family, and it must been a full house because Willem was one of 12 people living there. There’s no Civil War record for Willem, so it’s likely that he continued as a farmer and did not enlist in the Union Army.

Back in the Netherlands, Willem’s brother Jan Harmen (my great great grandfather) was raising his family in the village of Bennekom in the province of Gelderland. Born in 1818, Jan met a girl named Grada Jansen, and they were married in 1847. They started their family immediately and had five children between 1848 and 1855. Their first



Bennekom in 1885

child was a girl named Willempje. At the time of her birth, Jan’s occupation was listed as “molenaarsknecht” or miller’s assistant. In 1857, their sixth child was stillborn. Two years later in 1859, my great-grandfather Abraham was born. By this time, Jan Harmen’s occupation had changed to “landbouwer” or farmer. Two years later in 1861, another child was stillborn. It was their last. My great great grandmother Grada died in childbirth.

Jan moves to America

With the end of the American Civil War in 1865, Willem returned to the Netherlands to accompany his brother and family on their migration to Iowa. In August 1865, the family left the Netherlands permanently. Jan bid farewell to his two infant children and his wife Grada, leaving them forever buried in Dutch soil.

Willem accompanied Jan, Jan’s daughters Willempje, Martina, and Gertruida, and Jan’s sons Albertus, Geurt, and Abraham (my great-grandfather) to Liverpool, England. On August 10, 1865, they set sail from Liverpool on board the SS Belgian, a modern steamship of the Allan Line. They arrived in the port of Québec City, Canada on August 20, 1865. The records of their journey are in contrast to some

historical notes, which suggest one member of the family did not survive the crossing. It's been rumored that Willempje, the oldest daughter, died during the trip and was buried at sea. More recent evidence, however, suggests differently.

The passenger record for the SS Belgian is explicit in listing two columns of data for the voyage. In the first column are the name, age, sex, and occupation of everyone departing from the Port of Liverpool. At the bottom of the first column, the number of passengers embarking on the voyage was totaled. The second column accounted for each person in the first column as they disembarked the ship in Québec City. Once again, the second column was totaled. The two column totals for the page in which the Van Roekels appear are the same — 49 passengers listed on the page departed Liverpool and 49 disembarked the ship in Québec City. The passenger list was a very carefully prepared and maintained document, for in 1865, it functioned as the immigration record for the English and Canadian governments. It's nearly certain that Willempje survived the Atlantic voyage to North America.

Once off the ship in Québec City, the family traveled to New York City and passed through the Castle Garden Immigration Station. Their immigration records are found there and are not merely duplicates of the passenger records from the SS Belgian. This is certain because one person in the party is not listed in the Castle Garden records. It's Willem. He did not have to repeat immigration procedures since he was already living in the United States. However, Jan and all six of his children are listed in the Castle Garden records, and the details of those records are sufficiently different to suggest that they are not copies of the SS Belgian's.

The Belgian's passenger record lists Jan's name as Jan H. V. Roekel and show his occupation as artisan. At Castle Garden, his name is listed as Jan H Van Roekel, and he was classified as an artist. In the passenger list, Willempje is listed as a spinster but on the Castle Garden record she is shown as a Wilhelmina, and she is listed as a housewife — probably because she is the oldest female in charge of the children. Both Martina and Albertus are listed as tailors in the



Jan Harmen Van Roekel

Belgian passenger list, but on the Castle Garden record, Martina is listed as a dressmaker, and Albertus is shown with the occupation of tailor. It's a documented fact that Willempje was still alive in New York City. But since there is no record of her ever being in Marion County, Iowa, it's likely that the rumor of her death is true but that she died somewhere after her admission to America at Castle Garden.

We don't know how the family traveled from Québec City to New York, although the historical records from the time suggest they sailed to Montreal, up the Richelieu River to Lake Champlain, through the Champlain Canal and into the Hudson River to New York City.

Neither do we know how they traveled from New York to Marion County. Like earlier Dutch, they likely took trains, canal boats,



Willem and Janneke Van Roekel – ca 1880.
Willem was the first Van Roekel in America.

steamboats, covered wagons, and traveled by foot. It's most likely that it was during this part of their long journey that Willempje died. The trip from New York City to Pella was long, difficult, and dangerous in 1865. Clean water and fresh food were scarce, and sanitary conditions were deplorable. Every mode of transportation was crowded with every manner of human being. Along with immigrants were refugees and discharged soldiers from the American Civil War, which had just ended four months earlier.

Control and treatment of infections was nonexistent. What was ironic for these Dutch settlers is that one of their very own countrymen, Antonie van Leeuwenhoek, discovered bacteria in the 1670s, but it wasn't until 1870 that bacteria were discovered to cause deadly illness. Antibiotics did not yet exist. From 1865 to 1873, epidemics of smallpox, cholera, typhus, typhoid, scarlet fever, and yellow fever ravaged the eastern US. There were ample opportunities for everyone

in the Van Roekel family to contract a variety of life-threatening illnesses along the way – especially after their exposure to who knows what diseases at the Canadian Quarantine Station at Grosse Île just below Quebec City. And, of course, there were always accidents. One of these many hazards probably befell Willempje along the way.

By late August or early September, the family (now down to six with Willempje's death) arrived in Pella — just in time to settle in for the winter. The Van Roekel family now had both feet in America.

About the immigrants

As mentioned earlier, many of the Dutch immigrants who came in connection with the immigrant associations were middle-class, and many of them had financial resources. That made it possible for them to set themselves up once they made it to America. That seems to be the case for the Van Roekels.

By 1870, Willem moved to a farm in Richland Township of neighboring Mahaska County. He was still single and had amassed real estate valued at \$2400 and personal possessions worth \$823. That's about \$76,000 in 2024. He also became a citizen with voting privileges. In 1876, Willem moved west to Sioux County, Iowa. On November 3, 1876, he homesteaded 80 acres of land in section 34 of Holland Township just east of Orange City. In Sioux County, he met a widow named Janneke de Kray (maiden name of Vanden Brink). She was 43. They married in January 1877. Her five children made Willem an instant father at the age of 46. By 1900, the census shows they had six more children. They were still living in Holland Township near Orange City. Willem had invested in real estate and was now a landlord. Janneke died in September 1907, and Willem in October 1908. Both are buried in West Lawn Cemetery in Orange City Iowa.

Jan and his children Albertus, Gertruida, and Abraham also moved to a farm in Richland Township of Mahaska County. The 1870 federal census showed that Jan had real estate valued at \$1000. Jan had changed his name to John, Albertus became Albert, and Gertruida had

somehow settled on the name of Dina. By 1880, Abraham had taken over the farm from his father who was living with them and helping with the work. Abraham had married a lady named Nennetje (Nancy) Van de Kroll and their first two children Wilhelmina and John had been born. (See sidebar at right,)

Martina moved from Pella to Orange City, and in 1889, married William Korver. Between 1870 and 1896 they had eight children. Willem died in 1909. Martina lived another 15 years and died in 1924. She and William are buried in Orange City's Westlawn Cemetery.

Albertus, who changed his name to Albert, changed it once again to Bart. He also moved to Orange City, and in 1876, he homesteaded 80 acres of farmland in the same section of land as his uncle Willem. Bart married Nieltje (Nelly) Van Peursem in 1875, and over the next 23 years, they had 14 children. Bart died in January 1930 and Nelly in November of the same year. Both are buried in Westlawn Cemetery.

Geurt changed his name to Gerrit, and he moved to Sioux Center, Iowa. He married a lady named Christina Rouwenhorst. In 1883, they had one child. When Christina died two years later in 1885, Gerrit married her younger sister Matilda Rouwenhorst. They had eight children together. Gerrit died in 1918 and Matilda in 1920. Gerrit and his wives are buried in Sioux Center's Memory Gardens Cemetery. The birthdate on Gerrit's stone is wrong.

Dina (Gertruida) continued living in the Dutch colony in central Iowa. She married Marinus Van Gorp and somehow picked up the nickname Fruitje with his family. She finally settled on the Americanized Gertrude, and was known by that name for rest of her life. Between 1877 and 1892, they had six children. Gertrude died in 1912 and Marinus in 1927. The location of their graves is uncertain but believed to be somewhere in either Marion or Mahaska Counties.

Gertrude was the only one of Jan's children to remain in the Dutch colony near Pella and yet today the Van Roekel name is still prevalent around both Marion and Mahaska Counties. The obvious question is who was the patriarch of the Van Roekel name in the Pella area?

Nennetje's immigration story perfectly illustrates the fragile nature of our individual family stories, and how easily they can be disrupted by events beyond anyone's control. Nennetje came to America in 1866 aboard a ship called the SS England. It departed from Liverpool on March 28 of that year with 1200 passengers. Most were Dutch, Irish, and German. Nennetje was traveling with her parents and five of her siblings. The children ranged in age from one to fourteen. Nennetje was eight at the time.

On the morning of the fourth day of the voyage, an eight-year-old boy was found dead in his bed. By that evening, a 35-year-old Irish passenger was sick with stomach and leg cramps. Soon the ship's doctor diagnosed an outbreak of cholera aboard the SS England. Nothing could be done, and by the time the ship arrived in Halifax on April 8, the disease had spread to the crew as well. The port physician arrived on board to more than 200 active cases and numerous dead bodies.

The SS England was quarantined in Halifax harbor near Mc Nab's Island. The Irish and German passengers frequently fought with each other, and before long, separate Irish and German tent camps were set up on the island. The rest of the passengers were placed on a hospital ship named the Pyramus, and during the 10-day quarantine, the England was decontaminated. By the time the epidemic was over, more than 300 people had died. Among them were Nennetje's mother and her three youngest siblings. Only Nennetje, her older brothers Jan and Hendrik, and her father Geurt survived to see their new home in Mahaska County, Iowa.

Immigration records show that in addition to Jan Harmen's brother Willem two more of Jan's brothers appeared in Pella in the years after Willem's arrival. Those two brothers were named Rut and Hendrik. According to passenger lists, both brothers arrived in America in 1858 on board the ship Josephine. At the time of their arrival, Hendrik was not yet married. Traveling with Rut were his wife Goutje Vande Pol, and according to the passenger list, his twin children — a boy named William and a girl named Cornelia. Both brothers settled in the Pella area where they remained after Jan and his children moved away.

Rut and Goutje raised a family of 10 children. Hendrik married a lady named Hendrikje Klein. They too had 10 children, although their first died at childbirth. A Van Roekel cousin named Lubbert Van Roekel arrived in Pella in 1875. He married Steventje Vande Pol, and they had at least one child. Other Van Roekels may have come, too, but we can be certain that Rut, Hendrick, and Lubbert are the patriarchs of many central Iowa Van Roekels who today live in and around the towns of Pella, Oskaloosa, and Sully in central Iowa.

In 1883, my great-grandfather Abraham and his wife Nancy moved his father John and their children to Sioux County. In 1889, my great-great-grandfather John died there. It's said that he was buried in the Hospers cemetery. But if so, his tombstone is missing, his grave cannot be located, and John is now lost to history. His will is on the next page

By 1900, Abraham and Nancy were farming in West Branch Township. They'd had nine more children by this time including my grandfather Gradus (George). Their last child was born in 1902. In 1905 their youngest son Johannes was killed in a farm accident. He was only six years old.

By 1910, the family had moved to a farm just a couple miles north of Orange City in Holland Township, where they were farmed until Abraham retired. Abraham had some of his father's talents as an artisan. In 1901, the United States Patent Office granted him a patent for a veterinary instrument for use in the delivery of baby farm animals. In 1913, he was granted another patent for a corn drying rack

designed to keep drying grain away from rodents. Both patents have been located in the archives of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and are reproduced later in this book.

When they retired from the farm, Abraham and Nancy moved to Boyden, Iowa. They had just completed building a new house when Abraham contracted a case of pus poisoning following appendicitis. He died on January 14, 1917. Nancy died 11 years later on November 28, 1928. Abraham and Nancy are buried in the Sheridan Township Cemetery at Boyden Iowa.



The Van Roekel family plot and the headstones of Abraham and Nancy

Abraham's will entered probate four months after his death His brother Gerrit was executor, but before probate was completed, Gerrit died. The court appointed Abraham's oldest son John as the new

I, Jan van Roekel of Sioux County, State of Iowa being of sound disposing mind and memory, and of full age, do hereby make and ordain this my last Will and Testament hereby revoking all former wills by me made.

I give devise and bequeath to my beloved son Abraham van Roekel all my household furniture consisting of one heating stove a base burner, one bedstead all my bedding one table and all my clothing

The residue of all my personal property in what ever it may consist to be equally divided among my five children Abraham van Roekel, Bart van Roekel, Gerrit van Roekel Lina Kour but my daughter Geertuida van Gorp to receive the sum of Fifty Dollars this of her equitable share on account of advancement made to her during her marriage or their heirs.

I hereby appoint William van Roekel Executor of this my last will and testament. I also request that he be required to give no bond as an Executor.

Executed at Leam township Sioux County, Iowa, this 18th day of December 1888.

The foregoing instrument was at the date thereof subscribed by Jan van Roekel in our presence, and he at the same time, declared the same to be his last Will and Testament; and by his request we signed our names thereto as witnesses both in his presence and in the presence of each other.

Jacob Koolbeck of Sioux County Iowa
Daniel Mow of Sioux County Iowa.

Jan Harmen Van Roekel's will

Last Will and Testament of Abraham van Roekel.

In the name of God, Amen;

Abraham van Roekel of the County of Sioux and State of Iowa, being in count healed of body and of disposing mind and memory, do make and publish this my last Will and Testament, hereby revoking all former Wills by me at any time made.

Art. 1. I direct that all my debts, including funeral expenses and the expenses of administration be paid by my executor.

Art. 2. I give to my beloved wife Remetie van Roekel the use of all my property, both real and personal, during the term of her natural life, she to have the use, profit and benefit thereof, provided always, that she shall remain my widow, if in any event, that she should again marry the life Estate hereby granted to terminate at once, and in lieu of such Estate, I hereby give devise and bequeath to my said beloved wife one half of all my Estate both Real and Personal.

Art. 3. I give devise and bequeath all the real and residue of my Estate both Real and Personal, to my children named in this article, or to their legal heirs or assigns share and share alike, my children are William van Roekel, Bart van Roekel, Gerrit van Roekel, Lina Kour van Roekel, Geertuida van Roekel, Hendrik van Roekel, Bart van Roekel, Geertuida van Roekel, and Johanne van Roekel. The shares of my children that are under the age of twenty one years at the time of my decease or at the time of the decease of my beloved wife Remetie van Roekel, (if she does not again marry) what the time of the marriage of my said wife (if she should again marry) shall be held in trust for them by the guardian of my minor children herein after to be appointed.

Art. 4. It is my Will that if my beloved wife Remetie van Roekel, does not again marry then all of my property Real as well as Personal, is to be divided (after her decease) among my said children herein above named, share and share alike, and if she shall marry after my decease then the remaining one half (not willed to her) to be divided among my said children as herein before provided.

Art. 5. If one or more of my children should depart this life before the time set for the division of my property, leaving no legal issue, then the share or shares of such child or children, to be equally divided among those remaining of my children.

Art. 6. I hereby appoint my Brother Gerrit van Roekel Executor of this my last Will and Testament.

In Witness Whereof I have hereunto set my hand this 27th day of December, 1899.

Abraham van Roekel

Abraham Van Roekel's will

executor, and the estate was finally settled in 1919. The youngest daughter Geertruida was still a minor when the estate was settled and Nennetje filed papers to be named the legal guardian of Geertruida's future financial and inheritance interests.

The Next Generation

My grandfather Gradus (George) was born on November 18, 1883. In 1913, he married Fannie Haagsma at Alton, Iowa. They begin raising a family, and between November of that year and 1931 they had a total of eight children. Their second child, Nancy, died at the age of seven. Their third child was my mother, Dorothy. In all they had six girls and two boys.

Like his father and grandfather, George was a farmer. The string of Federal Census forms from 1920 to 1940 provide us with some insight into the family's fluid history during that time.

In 1920, George and Fannie were farming in Franklin Township of O'Brien County near Sanborn. Their first three children, Bertha, Nancy, and Dorothy had all been born. By 1925, the family had moved to Sioux County to a farm in Capel Township and by 1932, a rented farm near the small village of Perkins in nearby Center Township. Young Nancy had died by this time, but the family had grown with the birth of four more children — Ada, Nancy #2, Abe, and Rich. The youngest child Francis was born in 1931. Their lives were about to be caught up in the turmoil of the Great Depression.

During the Depression, commodity prices on grain, milk, beef, and poultry fell to record lows. For many farmers, their income nearly disappeared. Rather than selling their corn, many used it to heat their homes as corn was a cheaper alternative to burn than more expensive coal. And while farmers can easily feed their families from the products they produced, most, including my grandfather could not make enough money from selling their products to pay the farm rent. Sometime in that five-year period between 1930 and 1935, my grandfather encountered that problem and had to give up his farm.

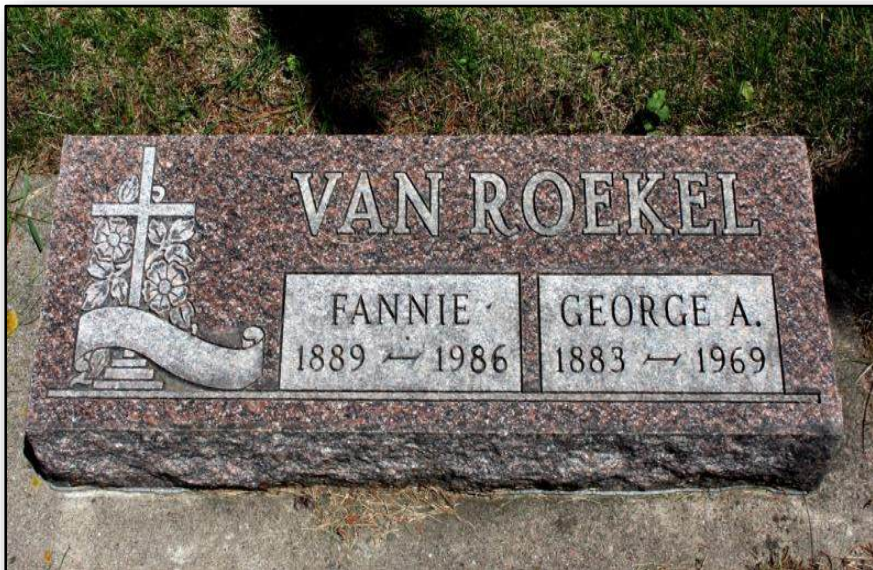
The 1940 census was the first to ask specific questions about people's location in 1935. This was done to understand the displacement of the population as a result of the Great Depression. The 1940 census shows that my grandfather had moved from Sioux County back to a farm in Franklin Township of O'Brien County. But the census questions about the family circumstances in 1935 provide us with particularly useful insight to their plight in the intervening years.

In 1935, my grandparents and daughter Bertha were living in Sioux County — but they were not farming. My mother and her sister Ada (ages 16 and 14) were living near Sanborn, and Abe and Rich (ages three and one) were living with another family near Sioux Center. It also appears that my mother's sisters Nancy and Francis were living with yet a different family in Sioux County. The Depression had temporarily split up their family.

During those years, my grandfather worked for the government's WPA or Works Progress Administration, a Roosevelt era program that gave public works jobs to millions of unemployed during The Depression. The Sioux County WPA group built the Rock Valley baseball grandstands and worked on other projects too. Like most families caught up in the maelstrom, my grandparents eventually got back on their feet.

By 1940, they were back in O'Brien County on a rented farm, but the 1952 farm atlas shows that, by then, the family owned a 160-acre farm in the northeast quarter of section six of Franklin township—three miles west and four miles north of Sanborn. They continued farming there until their retirement. Then they moved to a small house in Sheldon, Iowa. Their daughter Bertha was developmentally disabled and lived with them.

My grandfather died in 1969 at age 85. Shortly after, my grandmother and Bertha moved to Valley Manor, a nursing home in Rock Valley. Bertha died in 1985, and my grandmother died in 1986 at age 96. My grandparents and Bertha are buried in East Lawn Cemetery in Sheldon, Iowa.



The grave of George and Fannie Van Roekel



Grandpa George with my brother Lee



Grandpa George with my brother Roger



George Van Roekel with his 1952 Studebaker Champion



The author at the Roekel Woods in 2018



The Oude Kerk or Old Church in Bennekom, Netherlands. This was the Van Roekel family church before their migration to America in 1865. Originally a Catholic Church named St. Alexander Church, it became a Protestant place of worship following the Dutch Reformation. Parts of the church date to 1290.



A sculpture honoring the common laborers of Bennekom

Descendants of Derck Backer Van Roekel

Generation #1 – Derck Backer van Roekel – b. 1615, d.??
& Unknown Spouse had a child named

Generation #2 – Willem Dircksen Backer van Roekel – b. 1645, d.??
& Spouse Jantje Geurtsen – b. ??, d. ??, m. 1670 had a child named

Generation #3 – Gerrit Willems Backer van Roekel – b. 1680, d. 1757
& Spouse Anneken Willems – b. 1680, d. 1746, m. 1705 and had a child named

Generation #4 – Willem Gerrits Backer van Roekel – b. 1709, d. 1780
& Spouse Maartje Willems van Vuijsteren – b. 1713, d. ??, m. 1730 had a child named

Generation #5 – Bart van Roekel – b. 1740, d. 1813
& Spouse Geertrui Hecriksen (Berendsen) – b. 1751, d. 1826, m. 1772 had a child named

Generation #6 – Barend van Roekel – b. 1789, d. 1857
& Spouse Willempje van de Hoef, - b. 1793, d. 1847, m. 1815 had a child named

Generation #7 – Jan Harmen van Roekel – b. 1818, d. 11 Apr 1889
& Spouse Grada Jansen – b. 1823, d. 3 Sep 1861, m. 10 Feb 1847 had a child named

Generation #8 – Abraham Van Roekel – b. 21 Mar 1859, d. 24 Jan 1917
& Spouse Nennetje Van De Krol – b. 22 Aug 1858, d. 20 Nov 1928, m. 1876 had a child named

Generation #9 – Gradus (George) Van Roekel – b. 15 Nov 1883, d. 15 May 1969
& Spouse Finkje (Fannie) Haagsma – b. 3 Nov 1889, d. 19 Jun 1986, m. 19 Feb 1913 had a child named

Generation #10 – Dorothy Van Roekel – 24 July 1918, d. 19 Aug 2010
& Spouse Jake Ver Mulm – 16 Oct 1919, d. 29 Oct 2002, m. 19 Feb 1941 had a child named

Generation #11 – Dennis Eugene Ver Mulm – b. 6 Jul 1952
& Spouse Martha Leu Scott – b. 14 Apr 1952, m. 15 May 1976 had children named

Generation #12 – Scott Evan Ver Mulm – b. 10 Feb 1982
& Spouse Kasey Baker – b. 27 Feb 1979, m. 9 Oct 2010

Generation #12 – Molly Erin Ver Mulm – b. 7 Nov 1986

The Van Roekel family has its roots in Gelderland province with many Van Roekels born in either Bennekom or Ede. This was the home Jan Harmen Van Roekel left in 1865. When he said goodbye to the Netherlands, he left behind two stillborn sons and his wife Grada, who died giving birth to their last child. It appears that his younger brother Willem (who emigrated in 1857) returned to the Netherlands to accompany the family on their journey to America.

Jan Harmen and his family sailed on the SS Belgian, an English flagged vessel traveling a regular Liverpool to Québec City route. After 10 days at sea, they stopped at Grosse Ile quarantine station and then traveled on to Québec City arriving there on May 20, 1865. From there, they traveled to New York City and Castle Garden immigration station. After their admission to the US, they went on to Pella, Iowa.

The 1870 Federal Census shows them living in Richland Township of Mahaska County with a Pella, Iowa post office address. The census shows that Abraham was head of the household and that Jan was living with them. In the early 1870s, parts of the family began leaving central Iowa for Sioux County. Eventually, Abraham and his family took Jan and moved to Sioux County, too. According to the old Orange City Volksfreund (People's Friend), a Dutch language newspaper, Jan died on April 11, 1889, at 71 years of age. He is supposedly buried at Hospers, Iowa, but his grave cannot be located.



Castle Garden Immigration Station about 1885



SS Belgian
1865 - 1872

JAN HARMEN VAN ROEKEL - *Family Group Sheet*

Jan Harmen Van Roekel

Birth: 2 Jul 1818 in Beaneekom, Gelderland, Netherlands
 Death: 11 Apr 1889 in Hoppers, Sioux, Iowa
 Parents: Barend Van Roekel and Willempe Vande Hof



Grada Jansen

Birth: 20 Nov 1823 in Wageningen, Geld., Netherlands
 Death: 3 Sep 1861 in Ede, Gelderland, Netherlands
 Parents: Geurt Jansen and Martina Melissen



Marriage: February 10, 1847 in Wageningen, Gelderland, Netherlands

CHILDREN	SEX	BIRTH	SPOUSE	MARRIAGE	DEATH
Willempje Van Roekel	F	1848 in Ede, Netherlands			1865 - On the journey to Pella
Martina Van Roekel	F	1849 in Ede, Netherlands	Willem Korver	8 Jun 1869	3 Jun 1924 in Orange City, Iowa
Albertus Van Roekel	M	1850 in Ede, Netherlands	Neeltje Van Peurse	20 Oct 1875	19 Jan 1930 in Orange City, Iowa
Geurt Van Roekel	M	2 Dec 1852 in Ede, Netherlands	Christina Rowenhorst Mathilda Rowenhorst	21 Sep 1883 1886	5 Dec 1918 in Sioux Center, Iowa
Geertruida Van Roekel	F	15 Jan 1856 in Ede, Neth.	Marinus Van Gorp	1876	23 Feb 1911 in Pella, Iowa
Unnamed Stillborn Child	M	29 Jan 1857 in Ede, Neth.			29 Jan 1857 in Ede, Netherlands
Abraham Van Roekel	M	21 Mar 1859 in Ede, Neth.	Nennetje (Nancy) Van de Krol	23 Oct 1877	21 Jan 1917 Boyden, Iowa
Unnamed Stillborn Child*	m	3 Sep 1861 in Ede, Neth.			3 Sep 1861 in Ede, Netherlands
* Note: Grada died in childbirth with this child					

ABRAHAM VAN ROEKEL- *Family Group Sheet*

Abraham Van Roekel

Birth: 21 Mar 1859 in Ede, Gelderland, Netherlands
 Death: 24 Jan 1917 in Boyden, Sioux, Iowa
 Parents: Jan Harmen Van Roekel &
 Grada Jansen



Nennetje Van De Krol

Birth: 22 Aug 1858 in Ede, Gelderland, Netherlands
 Death: 20 Nov 1928 Boyden, Sioux, Iowa
 Parents: Guert Van De Krol &
 Willempje van Middendorp



Marriage: 25 Oct 1877 in Pella, Marion County, Iowa

CHILDREN	SEX	BIRTH	SPOUSE	MARRIAGE	DEATH
Wilhelmina Van Roekel	F	1 Aug 1878 in Marion, Iowa	Dirk J. Fransen	1897	8 Jan 1966 in Sibley, Osceola, Iowa
John Van Roekel	M	5 Jan 1880 in Iowa	Gertie Stryland	Feb 20 1907	11 Jun 1951 in Boyden, Sioux, Iowa
Gerrit Van Roekel	M	8 Sep 1881 in Sioux, Iowa	Driesje Van de Berg	4 Mar 1903	5 Mar 1947 in Sioux Center, Sioux, Iowa
Gradus (George) Van Roekel	M	18 Nov 1883 in Orange City, Iowa	Finkje (Fannie) Haagsma	19 Feb 1913	15 May 1969 in Sheldon, O'Brien, Iowa
Anthonie (Tony) Van Roekel	M	6 Mar 1866 in Sioux, Iowa	Jeanette Van Der Meer	27 Feb 1908	20 April 1969 in Chippewa, Minnesota
Tina Van Roekel	F	8 Nov 1888 in Sioux, Iowa	John Van Engen	29 Feb 1908	6 Jun 1964 in Orange City, Sioux, Iowa
Celia Van Roekel	F	25 Jun 1890 in Sioux, Iowa	Henry C. Langstraat	31 Oct 1911	20 Mar 1950 in Sioux Center, Sioux, Iowa
Bill Van Roekel	M	13 Jun 1892 in Sioux, Iowa	Mary Wielenga	4 Apr 1952	12 Dec 1956 in Maurice, Sioux, Iowa
Henry Van Roekel	M	20 Aug 1894 in Sioux, Iowa	Elizabeth Wielenga	18 May 1914	13 Aug 1973 in Sheldon, O'Brien, Iowa
Bart Van Roekel	M	22 Nov 1896 in Orange City, Sioux, Iowa	Mary Reekers	13 Mar 1916	11 Feb 1959 in Sheldon, O'Brien, Iowa
Johannes Van Roekel	M	28 Dec 1898 in Sioux, Iowa			4 Aug 1905 in Orange City, Sioux, Iowa
Geertruida Van Roekel	F	10 Apr 1902 in Sioux, Iowa	Harry Rensink	19 Nov 1923	2 Sep 1966 in Boyden, Sioux, Iowa



The Family of Abraham Van Roekel

Back Row (L-R) Tina, John, Bill, Gradus (George), Hank, Tony, Bert, Gerrit

Front Row (L-R) Wilhelmina, Abraham, Gert, Nancy, Celia

Inset – Johannes (Died in 1905)

GRADUS (GEORGE) VAN ROEKEL- *Family Group Sheet*

George Van Roekel

Birth: 18 Nov 1883 in Orange City, Sioux, Iowa
 Death: 30 May 1969 in Sheldon, O'Brien, Iowa
 Parents: Abraham Van Roekel &
 Nennetje (Nancy) Van De Krol



Finkje (Fannie) Haagsma

Birth: 3 Nov 1889 in Alton, Sioux, Iowa
 Death: 19 Jun 1986 in Rock Valley, Sioux, Iowa
 Parents: Dirk Jacobs Haagsma & Baukje
 (Bertha) Tymensma



Marriage: February 19, 1913 in Alton, Sioux, Iowa

CHILDREN	SEX	BIRTH	SPOUSE	MARRIAGE	DEATH
Bertha Van Roekel	F	7 Nov 1913 in Sanborn, O'Brien, Iowa			22 Apr 1985 in Rock Valley, Sioux, Iowa
Nancy Van Roekel	F	8 Mar 1916 in Sanborn, O'Brien, Iowa			5 Feb 1923 in Franklin, O'Brien, Iowa
Dorothy Van Roekel	F	24 July 1918 in Sanborn, O'Brien, Iowa	Jake Ver Mulm	19 Feb 1941	19 Aug 2010 in Sanborn, O'Brien, Iowa
Ada Johanna Van Roekel	F	2 Dec 1920 in Sanborn, O'Brien, Iowa			24 Jun 2020 in Cathedral City, Riverside, California
Nancy Van Roekel	F	27 Apr 1924 in Sanborn, O'Brien, Iowa	William Sinkey	26 Apr 1946	11 Jun 1996 in Sheldon, O'Brien, Iowa
Abraham (Abe) Van Roekel	M	6 My 1926 in Sioux Center, Sioux, Iowa	Maxine Simmons	7 Sep 1958	12 Jun 2018 in Council Bluffs, Pottawatomie, Iowa
Richard Van Roekel	M	4 May 1928 in Sioux Center, Sioux, Iowa	Shirley Emily Adams	30 Aug 1958	8 Jan 2009 in Hermiston, Umatilla, Oregon
Francis Geraldine Van Roekel	F	1931 Oct 1931 in Perkins, Sioux, Iowa	Earl Benz	3 Nov 1951	6 May 2015 in Pahrump, Nye, Nevada



The Family of Gradus (George) Van Roekel
Back Row (L-R) Nancy, Richard, Dorothy, Abraham, Ada
Front Row (L_R) George, Bertha, Francis, Fannie

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op heden denderden Julij achttien. hondert en achtien des voormiddags ten
 etf ieren. comparande voor Mr Everhard Dijk, van Meurs, schout, officier
 vanden Burgerstand des amts Ede, kwartier Arnhem, Provintie Gelde-
 land, **Berend van Roekel, van beroep Arbeider, oud Negenen en twintig**
 jaren wonende te Bonnekamp.

De welke ons heeft verklaard dat Zyn Huwtrouw Willem van
 ten Hooften, oud Leventwintig jaren, op een Tweeden dieremiddags des
 voormiddags ten half vyf ieren ten Zynen Huise is befallen van een
 Zoon oien welke hy verklaard de naam te zullen geven van Jan Harmen
 Waaraan wy dore acte hebben opgemeent in tegenwoordig heid van Ant
 van Craats boe oud eenen vyftig jaren en Gerrit van Craats kaste-
 lein oud twee en veertig jaren beide wonende te Ede die derelve bene-
 de comparant naboudelyke overleving met ons heeft getekend

Attest Craats

J. Van De Craats

B. van Roekel

E. van Meurs

Jan Harmen Van Roekel's birth record. It shows his father, Berend was a common laborer (von beroep Arbeider) and that he was born in the home at 1:30 p.m.

No. 154

Op heden den vierden September des jaars achttien honderd een-en-zestig, zijn voor Ons Antoni Willem van Dorp, Burgemeester, Ambtenaar van den Burgerlijken Stand der Gemeente Ede, Provincie Gelderland, verschenen: Jan van Harn oud twee en dertig jaren, van beroep arbeider, wonende te Bennekom en Aris Haalboom oud veertig jaren, van beroep landbouwer, wonende te Wageningen, welke Ons hebben verklaard, dat Grada Jansen, zonder beroep, geboren te Wageningen en wonende te Bennekom, echtgenote van Jan Harmen van Roskel, landbouwer, wonende te Bennekom, dochter van Geurt Jansen, landbouwer en van Martina Helisfen, zonder beroep, echtgenote wonende te Wageningen op zondag, den derden September dezes jaars, des namiddags ten half vyf ure, in den ouderdom van zeven en dertig jaren en negen maanden, ten haren huize te Bennekom binnen deze Gemeente is overleden.

Waarvan wij deze Acte hebben opgemaakt, die na voorlezing door den tweeden Com-
parant en ont Ambtenaar is geteekend, hebbende de eerste Com-
parant verklaard wegens blindheid niet te kunnen schrijven.
A. Haalboom

[Handwritten signature]

The death certificate filed for Jan Harmen's wife Grada. It shows that she died on September 3, 1861 at about 4:30 in the afternoon. Grada died from complications with childbirth. The death certificate for Jan and Grada's last child shows that the child died just a few hours before Grada on the same day,

SS Belgian No 4 *52*

Ports of Embarkation	Names of Passengers	Age of each Adult of 17 years & upwards				Children between 1 & 17 years			Profession, Occupation, or Calling, of Passengers	ENGLISH			SCOTCH			IRISH			ALIENS			Port at which Passengers have contracted to Land
		Married	Single	M.	F.	M.	F.	Infants		Adults	Children	Infants	Adults	Children	Infants	Adults	Children	Infants	Adults	Children	Infants	
Liverpool.	552 Van N. V. Roekel 48								Artist													Quebec
	Wilhelmina						17		Spinster													
	Martinie						16		Painter													
	Willempje						14															
	Geert							11	Chica													
	Gertrude							8	"													
	Abraham							6	"													
	Willem							34	Artist													

Above is an excerpt from the passenger list for the SS Belgian which sailed in 1865 from Liverpool to Quebec City with the Van Roekel family on board. Jan Harmen and his six children are shown in addition to his younger brother Willem who had come to America in 1857 and then returned after the American Civil War to accompany his widowed brother and family to their new home near Pella, Iowa. The second person listed is Jan's daughter Willempje, although her name is shown with an Anglicized spelling of Wilhelmina.

A family story relates that Willempje died during the voyage and was buried at sea. This is incorrect. The family journeyed from Quebec City to New York City where the records show that the family (including Willempje) passed through Castle Garden Immigration Station on August 10, 1865. Willempje undoubtedly died somewhere along the way as the family made their way from New York City to Iowa.

No. 99.

Op heden den een en twintigsten Maart des jaars achttien honderd negen-en-vijftig, verscheen voor Ons *Willem Horsting*, wethouder, Ambtenaar van den Burgerlijken Stand, der Gemeente *Ede*, Provincie *Gelderland*,

Jan Harmen van Roekel
oud *veertig* jaren, van beroep *landbouwer*
wonende te *Bennekom* en verklaarde
in tegenwoordigheid van *Dirk van de Craats* oud
acht en vijftig jaren van beroep *bode* en
Arend Buisser oud *acht en dertig* jaren
van beroep *Klerks*, beiden wonende te *Ede*
dat *syne echtgenootte Grada Jansen*, zonder beroep,
op den een en twintigsten deser maand Maart des
morgens *ten twee ure*, ten woon huize van hem
comparant te *Bennekom* binnen deze Gemeente is
bevalen van een kind van het manne lijk geslacht, aan het welk hy
verklaard heeft dat door hem de voornaam
van *Abraham* is
gegeven.

Waarvan wij deze acte hebben opgemaakt, die na voorlezing door den Comparant,
de getuigen en ons Ambtenaar is geteekend.

J. H. van Roekel
Dirk van de Craats *A. Buisser* *W. Horsting*

Abraham Van Roekel's birth record showing his birth in the home on March 21, 1859 at 2:00 a.m. His father Jan Harmen is described as a farmer (landbouwer).

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ABRAHAM VAN ROEKEL, OF SIOUX CENTER, IOWA.

VETERINARY INSTRUMENT.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 685,192, dated October 22, 1901.

Application filed March 2, 1901. Serial No. 43,585. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, ABRAHAM VAN ROEKEL, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Sioux Center, in the county of Sioux and State of Iowa, have invented a new and Improved Veterinary Instrument, of which the following is a full, clear, and exact description.

This invention relates to an apparatus for delivering animals in labor, and it is particularly adapted for use with sows.

The invention comprises a number of peculiarly-arranged finger-like rods adapted to be introduced into the vagina of the animal and to lie around the muzzle of the fetus.

One of these rods carries a prong having pivotal connection with it to swing with a limited movement, and a cord or the like is passed around the ends of the rods, so that when the muzzle of the fetus is properly inclosed by drawing on the cord the rods are engaged firmly therewith and the prong is caused to enter the skin of the fetus. The fetus being thus firmly grasped, it may readily be drawn out of the vagina as the animal labors.

This specification is a specific description of one form of the invention, while the claims are definitions of the actual scope thereof.

Reference is to be had to the accompanying drawings, forming a part of this specification, in which similar characters of reference indicate corresponding parts in all the figures.

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the invention. Fig. 2 is a side elevation thereof, and Fig. 3 is a detail view of the prong.

The before-mentioned finger-like rods are here shown to be four in number. In the drawings two are lettered *a*, one *b*, and one *c*. These rods are preferably formed of steel plated with nickel. The rods *a* are formed with eyes *a'* in their working ends, and the rod *b* has at its working end an enlargement *b'*, formed with a cavity *b''* and an eye *b'''*. In the cavity *b''* is pivoted the prong *d*, which has a shoulder bearing against the enlargement *c'* to limit the outward movement of the prong to the position shown in Fig. 3. The prong is, however, free to swing inward, so as to lie against the enlargement *b'* of the rod and at an inclination thereto. The rod *c* is formed with an eye *c'*, and through these several eyes is roven a cord *e*, the two parts of which are crossed in the eye *b'''* and the ends

of which are led back to the outer or handle end of the instrument. The cord is formed of cotton, hemp, or linen.

The various rods *a*, *b*, and *c* are held in proper position by two blocks or spaces *f* and *g*, formed of wood or iron. The block *f* is located at the rear extremities of the rods and has the rods fastened securely thereto, the three rods *a* and *b* being arranged in triangular relation to each other. The block *g* is placed about midway the rods and has the rods passed loosely through it, said rods still retaining their triangular disposition. Now it is clear that by grasping the rods *a* and *b* between the blocks *f* and *g* and pressing them together their front or working ends will be forced apart. These rods *a* and *b* are constructed of spring material, so that they will retain their form and return to their normal position when the pressure above mentioned is relaxed.

The rod *c* is arranged diagonally with respect to the other rods, as best shown in Fig. 2, and the part of the rod between the blocks *f* and *g* lies wholly within the triangle described by the rods *a* and *b*, and the front or working part of the rod *c* projects outside of the said triangle. This rod is held by the blocks *f* and *g* in other respects the same as the rods *a* and *b*. Now it will be apparent that when the rods *a* and *b* are grasped to spread the working ends the rod *c* is not affected, but retains its position with respect to the blocks *f* and *g*, while the ends of the rods *a* and *b* spread or contract, as may be.

In using the device the parts are disposed as in Fig. 1, and the front end of the instrument is introduced into the vagina of the animal. When the fetus is reached, the ends of the finger-rods are expanded and passed over the muzzle of the fetus, and the ends of the cord *e* are then drawn upon to contract the rods around the muzzle and to force the prong *d* through the skin, so as firmly to grasp the fetus. Preferably the instrument should be manipulated to engage the prong with the under jaw of the fetus just back of the bone, and thus not only will a firm hold be attained, but a very slight wound will be inflicted from which the animal readily will recover.

Having thus described my invention, I

2

685,192

claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent—

1. A veterinary instrument having resilient finger-like rods adapted to engage the fetus at their front ends, and spacers or blocks to which said rods are secured, the spacers or blocks being immovable relatively to the rods, one of the blocks being arranged at the rear portions of the rods and the other at an intermediate point, to permit operating the rods by grasping them at a point between the blocks.

2. A veterinary instrument having resilient finger-like rods adapted to engage the fetus at their front ends, spacers or blocks to

which said rods are secured, one of the blocks being arranged at the rear portions of the rods and the other at an intermediate point, to permit operating the rods by grasping them at a point between the blocks, and an additional rod held by the blocks and disposed diagonally of the first-named rods, for the purpose specified.

In testimony whereof I have signed my name to this specification in the presence of two subscribing witnesses.

ABRAHAM VAN ROEKEL.

Witnesses:

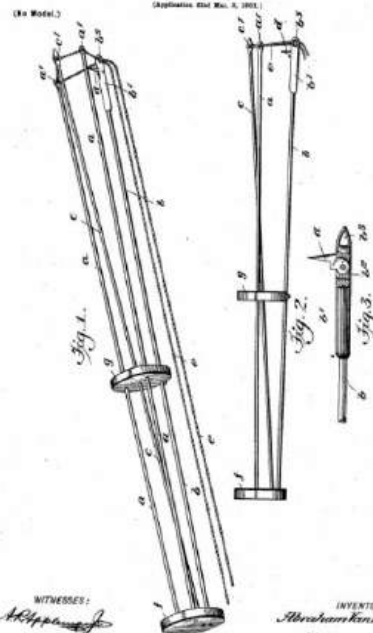
JOS. HYINK,
T. PRINS.

No. 685,192.

A. VAN ROEKEL.
VETERINARY INSTRUMENT.
(Application filed Mar. 2, 1901.)

Patented Oct. 22, 1901.

(See Model.)



WITNESSES:

Abraham Van Roekel
J. B. Brown

INVENTOR

Abraham Van Roekel
BY *Truitt*
ATTORNEYS

Abraham Van Roekel's first 1901 patent for a veterinary instrument

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ABRAHAM VAN ROEKEL, OF ORANGE CITY, IOWA.

CORN-DRYING RACK.

1,069,913.

Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Aug. 12, 1913.

Application filed September 15, 1910. Serial No. 582,113.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, ABRAHAM VAN ROEKEL, a citizen of the United States, residing at Orange City, Sioux county, State of Iowa, have invented a certain new and useful Corn-Drying Rack, of which the following is a specification.

The object of my invention is to provide a corn drying rack which is exceedingly simple in construction and which is supported on legs so that the corn is beyond the reach of such destructive creatures as rats and mice.

In the accompanying drawings: Figure 1 is a side elevation of my improved corn drying rack, and Fig. 2 is an end view of the same.

The rectangular frame 10 is mounted on legs 11. The open sides of the frame are covered with a lined lattice-work for holding the corn during the drying operation. This lattice-work consists of horizontal strips or wires 12 suitably spaced, and vertical strips or wires 13. The wires are suitably secured to the frame as by means of staples 14. The points where the wires cross are preferably welded or woven as indicated at 15. The wires on opposite sides of the frame are substantially in alinement so that the ears of corn may be properly supported by the wires. If the rack is of considerable length an intermediate partition 16 is employed,

the horizontal wires being fastened to this partition. The supporting legs 11 may be readily stamped or bent out of sheet metal, the end legs being of substantially inverted V-shaped form, while the center supporting leg is of substantially upright V-shaped form.

Having thus described my invention what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent of the United States is:

In combination, a corn drying rack, an open frame, said frame comprising three upright members and cross pieces for forming the top and bottom of said frame, and means for securing said parts together, a lattice work of wire fastened over the open sides of said frame for supporting the ears of corn, and means attached to said frame for supporting the same above the ground, said means consisting of a pair of legs, each comprising a single strip of sheet metal bent to form two downwardly diverging extensions and fastened to the frame at the bend of said strip, and a V-shaped leg secured to the bottom of said frame on the underside thereof, substantially as and for the purposes described.

ABRAHAM ^{his} X VAN ROEKEL
mark

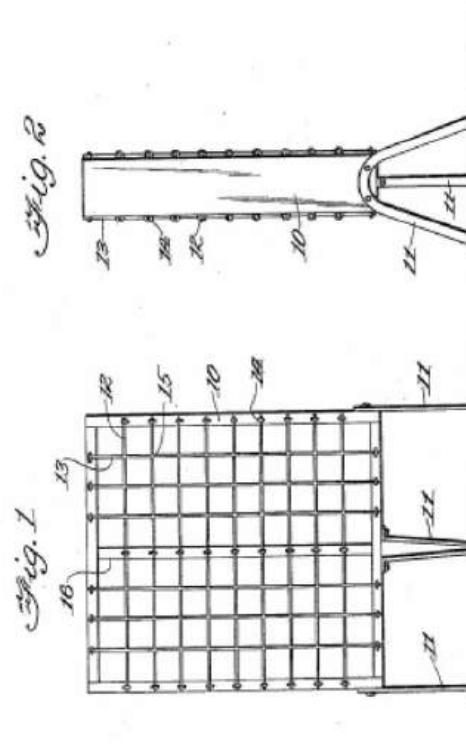
Witnesses:
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Copies of this patent may be obtained for five cents each, by addressing the "Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D. C."

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CORN DRYING RACK.
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Witnesses
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Abraham Van Roekel's second 1913 patent for a corn drying rack