

## News from Nan

### ANNA'S FAMILY HISTORY

# MY DUTCH GRANDPARENTS WERE A STRONG TEAM

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Based on all the evidence I have, my Dutch grandparents, Christiaan Frederik van Raaphorst and Elisabeth Johanna Maria Metsch, were an amazingly strong team, although they certainly didn't agree on everything during their long married life!



*Elisabeth and Chris van Raaphorst,  
about 1910*

Although I know little of their childhoods and early lives before their marriage, here are a few examples from their adulthood that I hope will prove my point.

First is the fact that they married rather late for their era (he was 28 and she was 26 when they were married on March 17, 1880) which gave them time to develop individually for a number of years before they became a team. Both had unique personalities, strong opinions, and a number of wide-ranging skillsets, which they developed in their youth, and which served them well later in life.

Both of them stuck to the religious traditions of their parents, and never compromised in their beliefs. Although they were married in De Oude Kerk ("the Old Church"), a Protestant landmark in Amsterdam

(Elisabeth was an Evangelical Lutheran), Chris never gave up the Catholic traditions that he learned as a child in the Rotterdam area, and Elisabeth never agreed to either turn Catholic herself or allow any of the children to be baptized in Chris's church.

During most of their married life in Amsterdam they owned businesses to which both contributed. One was a neighborhood store. Another was a moving and delivery business, which specialized in hoisting large pieces of furniture up the exterior walls of canal-side buildings with stairwells too narrow to provide passage for a large pieces of furniture.



*The hooks sticking out from the tops of these houses are used to help hoist large furniture to the upper floors.*

Finally, I am convinced that Chris and Elisabeth were the masterminds of the family's immigration to the New World, first to Canada and later to Michigan.

Although they themselves were handicapped by their ages (they were both in their 50s) and lack of fluency in English to fully participate in the economic opportunities offered by the booming economy in Ontario and Michigan in the early 1900s, they saw to it that all of their children, children-in-law, and grandchildren made it to the New World and got a good start. When they arrived in Detroit, and until he reached old age, Chris worked at one of the car companies, and Elisabeth turned home manager and chef for the whole van Raaphorst clan as they migrated, group by group.

I am grateful for the fact that their migration accomplishments made it possible for my parents to meet and marry, thus also ensuring my very existence.

Happy anniversary, Elisabeth and Chris!

◀ 2019   ◀ AMSTERDAM   ◀ DETROIT   ◀ METSCH   ◀ MICHIGAN   ◀ NETHERLANDS   ◀ VAN RAAPHORST