

## News from Nan

### ANNA'S FAMILY HISTORY

# MY PATERNAL GRANDFATHER, CHRIS VAN RAAPHORST

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*Chris in his Dutch army uniform,  
about 1872*

March 24, 2018, is the 166th anniversary of my paternal grandfather's birth. Christiaan Frederik van Raaphorst was born in 1852 in Amsterdam, Netherlands. I am his youngest grandchild, by many years.

That's Chris, above, in his Dutch army uniform.

Chris and I passed like ships in the night: he had been living with my parents but moved out just before I was born, and he died within a month of my birth.

Chris and his wife, Elisabeth, were part of a "chain migration" that involved the entire van Raaphorst family, twenty-some people in three generations, that took almost 20 years to complete.



*Chris and my parents by the Saint Clair River in Marysville, Michigan, 1940*

Chris was Catholic, and wanted to raise his kids as good church members. Every Sunday he required his six sons to bring home a mass card as proof of church attendance. Apparently the cards weren't dated, because each boy simply took one of last week's cards on their way out of the house on Sunday morning and brought it back again on their return home.

Chris also insisted on respectful prayers before every meal. As he was praying, the boys would try to steal a bit of food off whatever serving dish they were closest to. If "the old man" caught them, they got a clip on the ear.

There weren't enough chairs for the van Raaphorst family of nine, so some of the boys had to stand up to eat. If they complained, Chris told them that the queen's horses had to stand up to eat, so why shouldn't they?

Chris was mostly a hard-working carpenter and small business-owner, but he apparently occasionally "escaped" for a night at a local pub. A family story tells of Chris coming home late one night just before dawn and meeting a group of nuns on their way to early-morning mass. Chris insisted on singing and dancing with them. Apparently the noise, fuss, and lack of respect didn't go over well with the local church authorities.



*Chris and his wife, Elisabeth*

◀ 2018 ◀ AMSTERDAM ◀ BIRTHDAY ◀ HOLIDAYS ◀ NETHERLANDS ◀ VAN RAAPHORST